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S'mores by Dan Seegmiller

Welcome... the best of both worlds



Some loose brush strokes on a blank Photoshop canvas, a simple pencil doodle in your note pad, a collection of shapes formed using charcoal... whichever way you undertake each artistic expedition, you're in good hands with us. We're now devoting an entirely new section to the teachings of traditional art. Yes, we're still flying the flag for digital art, but we've given over 16 pages to the skills related to art's more analog form. Some people would say that these fundamentals of art – anatomy, life drawing, pencil skills – are the most important in improving your skills and gaining entry into a career in art. Turn to page 99 to see great artists who work in paint, oils, watercolours and many more media besides. They're all on hand to help you try out a new skill – or reignite an old one.

We've also decided on a new way to supply you with your art resources in each issue. We kept getting constrained by the disc size and were compressing the workshop videos, or leaving out vital content every month, which, after working so hard to get the assets, became frustrating.

So, from this issue you get the same exclusive content that you got on the disc, but it'll be of much better quality. All the assets are available to download or, as with the video workshops, you can choose to watch on our private YouTube page. Turn to page 6 to see the resources we have on offer for you this month, and how to get hold of them. And please get in touch if you have any comments. We'd love to hear them.

Claire

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Our special cover for subscribers this issue.



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FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX

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Reader FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART



See page 8 for the best new art

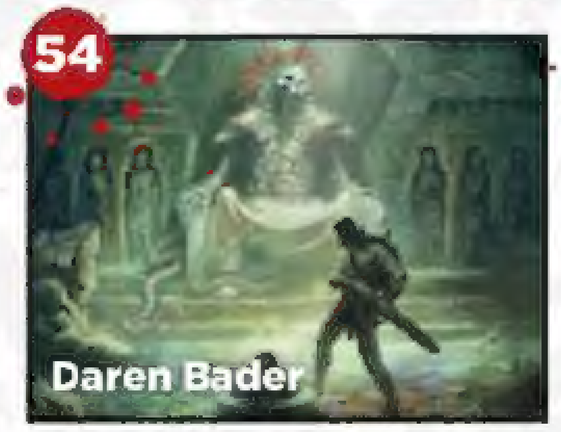








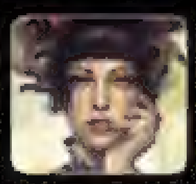






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Mix traditional and digital media

FANTASY illustrator

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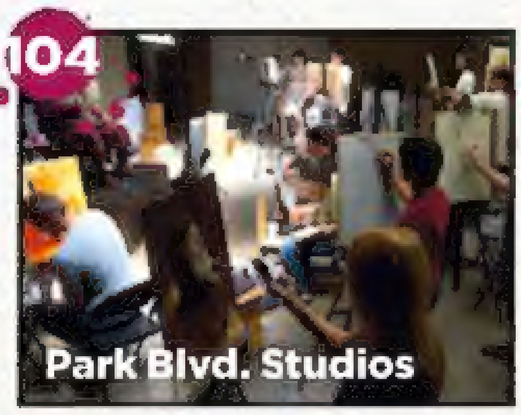
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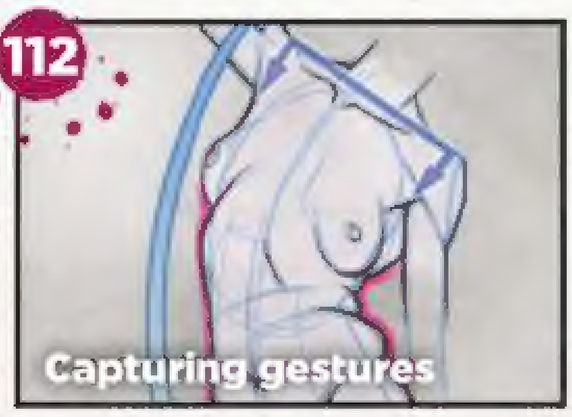




Park Blvd. Studios



Eerie artwork



Capturing gestures



Michael Whelan

NEW SECTION

Turn to page 99 for more...

ImagineFX Resources

As well as our workshop and Q&A videos, we also have a clip from James Gurney's How I Paint Dinosaurs and a complete video lesson from Digital-Tutors!





VIDEO SAMPLE

How I paint dinosaurs

Watch a clip from James Gurney's new video, in which he explains his dinosaur painting techniques.

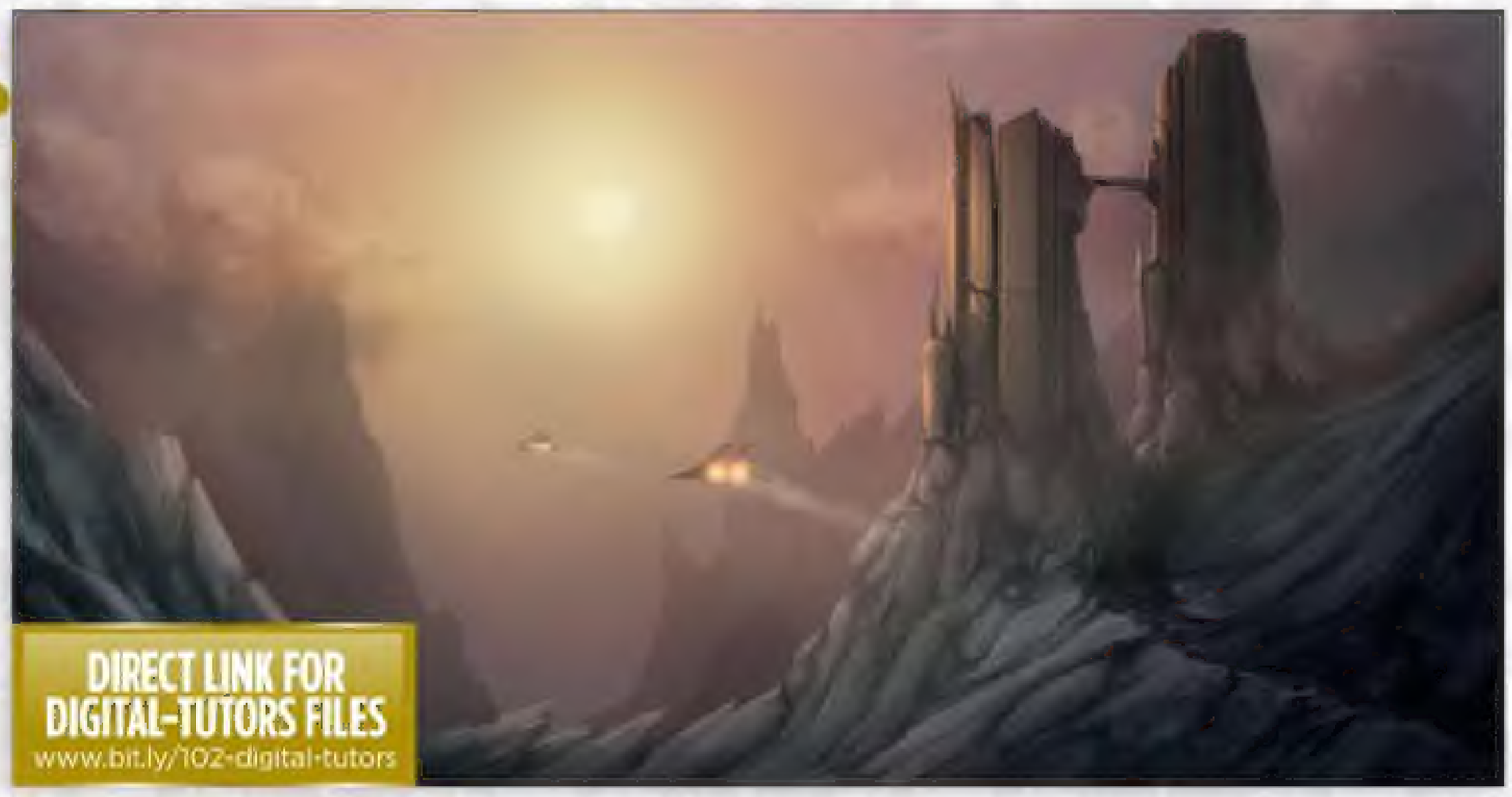


VIDEO TUTORIAL

Speed paint environments

Eddie Russell from Digital-Tutors gives a class on speed painting environment concepts in Photoshop.





ImagineFX

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NEXT ISSUE ON SALE **FRIDAY 8 NOVEMBER**

Printed in the UK by Printon (cover) William Gibbons (inside). Distributed by Seymour Distribution Ltd. +44 (0) 207 429 4000. © Future Publishing Limited 2013.
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POST ImagineFX Magazine, Future Publishing Ltd, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW, UK

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SUBSCRIPTIONS
US AND CANADA
PHONE (toll-free): 1-800 428 3003
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abc Print 15,365 Digital 2,371
The ABC combined print, digital and digital publication circulation for Jan-Dec 2012 is
17,736

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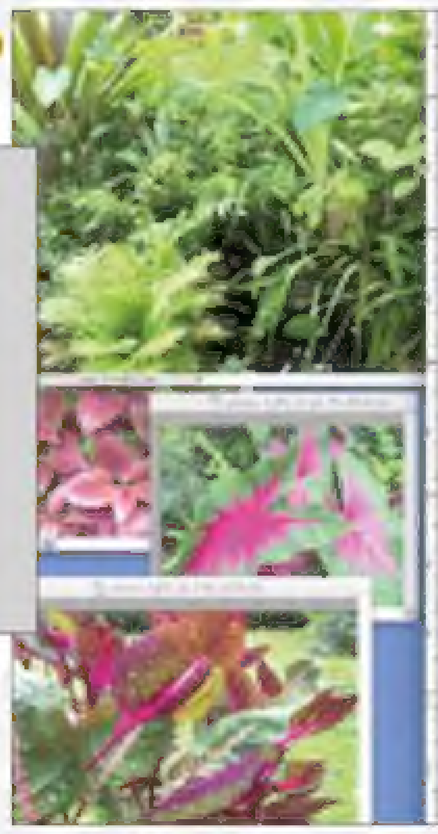
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EXCLUSIVE VIDEO TUITION!

Watch our videos to gain a unique insight into how our artists create their stunning art

WORKSHOP VIDEOS







OVER 8 HOURS of workshop and Q&A video to watch and learn from!

Christopher Burdett

Give a scene extra visual punch by using a complementary colour scheme.
Plus WIPs, brushes and final image



Don Seegmiller

Depict linear perspective in your art accurately using Corel's Painter X3.
Plus WIPs and final image



Lauren K Cannon

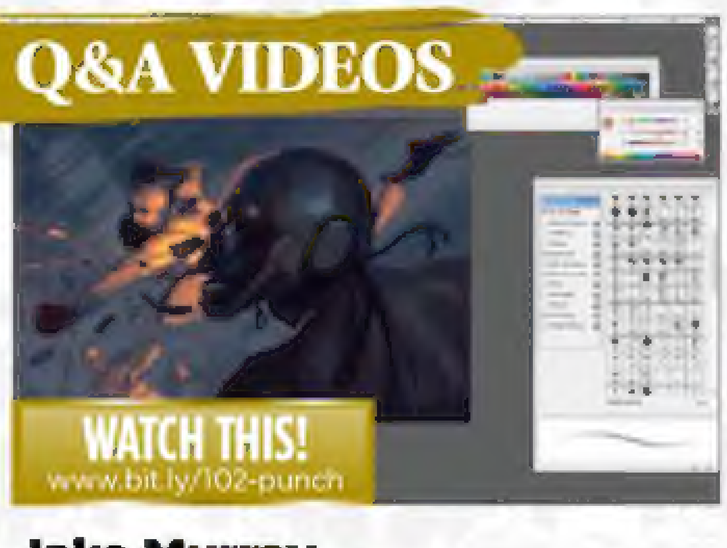
Use unusual colour and composition to produce an original horror portrait.
Plus WIPs, brushes and final image



Jim Pavelec

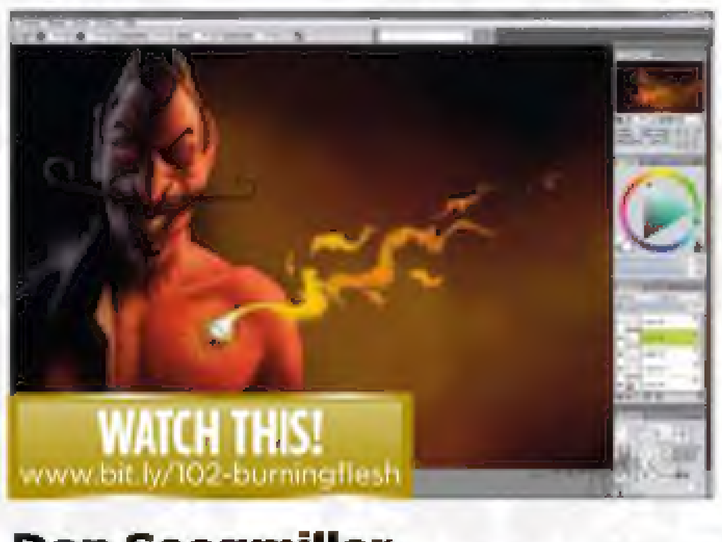
Create a terrifying comic book cover by using traditional methods of oil painting.
Plus WIPs and final image

Q&A VIDEOS



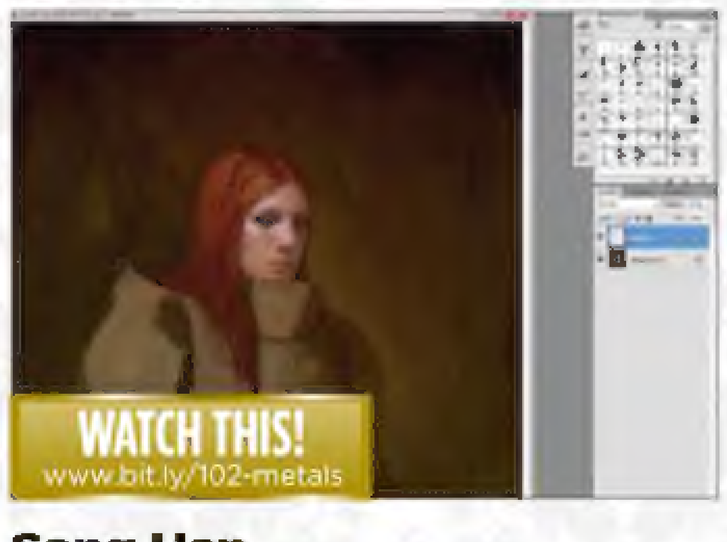
Jake Murray

How to create the blurring of action that portrays one character punching another.
Plus WIPs and final image



Don Seegmiller

How to depict the burning, smouldering flesh of a devilish supernatural character.
Plus WIPs and final image



Sang Han

Making metallic armour look worn without appearing too soft and comfy.
Plus WIPs and final image

PLUS Videos on depth of field, characters in water, creating architecture and character poses, as well as extensive WIP files and final images from a host of top artists, including Sean Andrew Murray, Tony Foti, Bill Corbett and Francesco Lorenzetti.

95 CUSTOM BRUSHES, INCLUDING...



SPOTTY BRUSH
Christopher Burdett created this to add texture, debris and movement.



MAGIK BRUSH
Jean-Sébastien Rossbach's way to achieve an expressive painterly style.



MIXER BRUSH
Yuko Rabbit finds this brush great for painting fabrics and fur effects.

Reader FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART

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ImagineFX ARTIST MONTH

Benjamin Zhang

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop



Benjamin's career thus far has comprised more ups and downs than a theme park ride tester. Of the six projects he's worked on in the past nine years, three have been cancelled. Fortunately, things have been looking up for the talented artist. "I got a job at Blizzard US, working on an ambitious project which has only a code name to the outside world: Titan," he says.

It's been a huge learning curve, but one that's paid off. The key concept he's learned is to look at the bigger picture – literally. "In the past I've got lost in painstaking details, when I should have been developing characters," Benjamin says.

1 ETHEREAL "Ethereals are World of Warcraft's inter-dimensional beings, and they're compelling figures to draw. This particular Ethereal has just discovered an important piece of treasure within an ancient tomb."

2 TAI MING DAN "Tai Ming Dan is a character from the MMORPG QQ Xian Xia Zhuan, developed by Tencent. Here, he's riding an ancient motorcycle across a vast wasteland with his sword at the ready."



ARTIST OF THE MONTH

Congratulations, Benjamin – you've won yourself a copy of Exposé 11 and d'artiste: Character Design! To find out more about these two great books, go to www.ballisticpublishing.com.



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FXPosé submissions to: fxpose@imaginefx.com

Artist crit

Concept artist Mark Molnar is impressed by Benjamin's skill at directing the composition



"Benjamin not only handles the focal points well, but also adds compositional elements that support the story and direct the viewer's eye to the face of the main character perfectly."

Reader FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART

Linda Treffler

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop, ZBrush



A single glance at Linda's images is all that's needed to understand her dominant themes. "I really like to draw dark and creepy pictures," she says. The wannabe concept artist is two years into a university course, and busy working in a student team on a horror game project, which perfectly suits her somewhat disturbing obsessions.

Linda uses a combo of ZBrush and Photoshop to create her images, but she still starts the old-fashioned way. "In order to keep up, improve and learn how the industry works I had to move my art from paper to the screen – although I'm still using pencil and paper for sketches and scribbles," she says.



IMAGINEFX CRIT



"As a first attempt at drawing raw flesh, I'd say Runner is pretty successful: like a car crash, it's both horrific and captivating. I love the cinematic feel of NGE – a deft use of perspective that puts the viewer at the heart of the action."

Gary Evans, Staff Writer

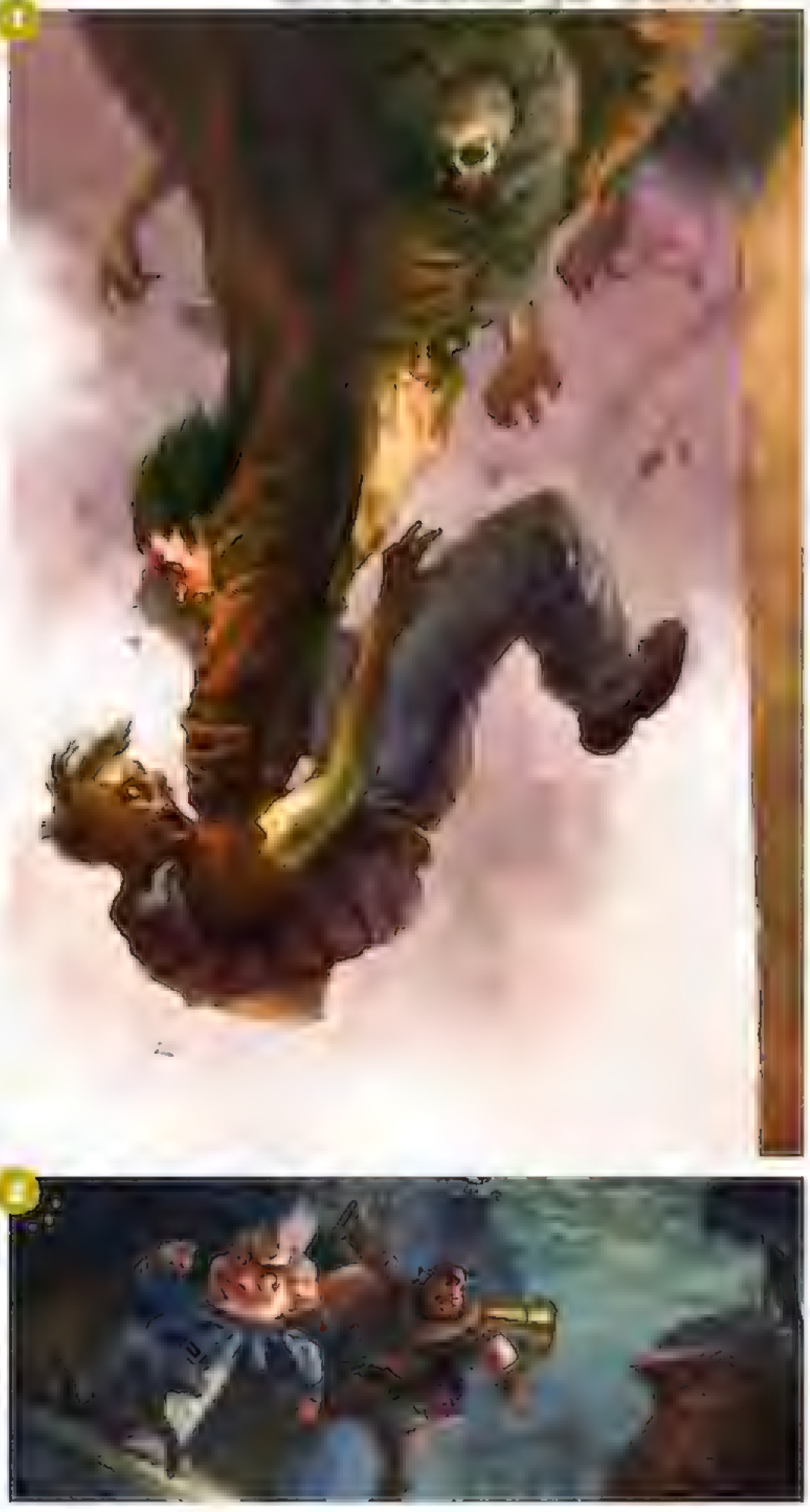


1 RUNNER "An enemy concept for our current project. I used a ZBrush sculpture as inspiration and worked it out in Photoshop. It was a challenge for me to get the texture for the inside part right – I'd never drawn raw flesh before."

2 NGE "I had a lot of fun drawing this because I used an unusual angle and perspective. I really love Neon Genesis Evangelion too – those mechas and the story are just amazing."

FXPosé submissions to: fxpose@imaginefx.com

Stonemags.com



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"I was first drawn to art by animation – movies specifically – at a pretty early age," says Tim. "Films like My Neighbour Totoro, Castle in the Sky, Akira and many others had a pretty big effect on me as a kid." Fast-forward a few years and drawing was an obvious choice for Tim when it came to making a career decision.

"I eventually enrolled into the Academy of Art University in San Francisco to study illustration," Tim says. "After a couple more years of no-nonsense Jedi training, I joined Disney Interactive Studios as a concept artist after graduation. It's pretty sweet to be able to draw pictures all day and call it my job."



"Nice to see that the undead can be as nasty to each other as they are to the living. Tim's scene has built-in dynamism thanks to his choice of capturing a Z vs V fight mid fall. But what happens when the gang hits the ground...?"

1 ODDS "I love me some zombies and vampires! I did a few pieces based on the idea of pitting the two groups against each other. Who will win – and most importantly, who will die first!?"

2 ESCAPE "This was a personal piece I did based roughly on a Brothers Grimm fairy tale called the Four Skilful Brothers. However, only two are featured here. My main goal for this piece was to convey a strong sense of storytelling and mood."

Reader FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART

Geneva Benton

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Photoshop



Despite her young age and lack of formal training, 19-year-old Geneva has already found a mature and unique aesthetic for her images, which are at once playful and dark. "I love patterns, circles, popping colours and flowing motions, and I strive to incorporate that into my style," she says.

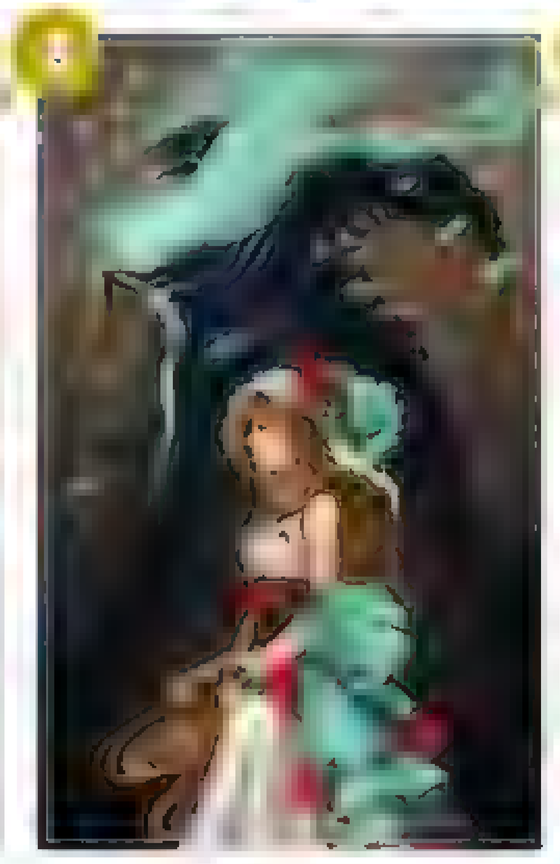
Geneva's approach to a new piece is to start with broad strokes and then fill in the details, and she loves Photoshop for its flexibility – and its community. "It amazes me how different other people's works are from each other, especially with each artist using the same software!" says the artist.



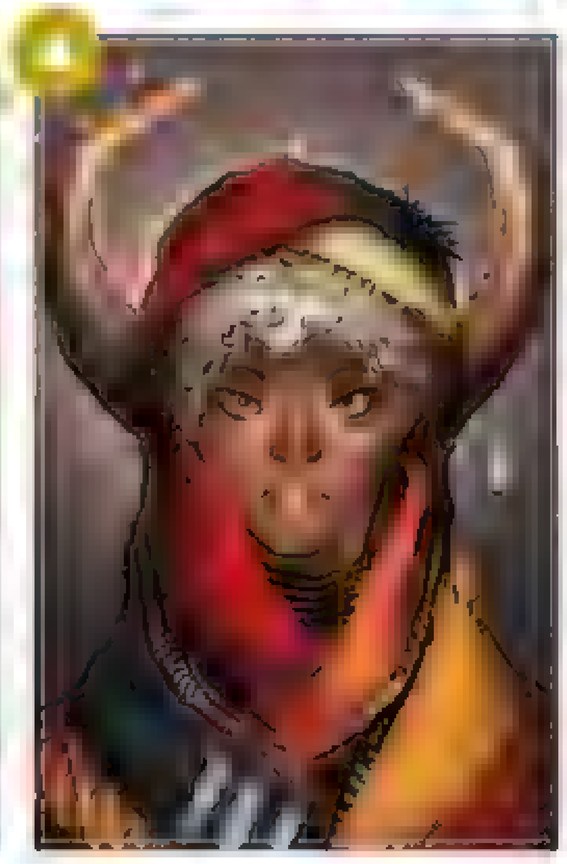
BLUE DECO HOOD "I love creating heavy, inconvenient items of clothing and decking them in patterns. I wanted each piece of clothing to tell a story, and used the icy landscape to accentuate this."



ROBE "This piece started out as a gift for a friend, but the more I worked on it the more attached I became to it. I really enjoyed going all-out with the colour combinations, and adding detail to the fish."



HADES AND PERSEPHONE "The myth of Hades spiriting Persephone away always intrigued me. I can just imagine how melancholic their wedding day must have been, and I used outlines and colours to express the merging of the characters."



TAURUS "Portraits are my number one favourite thing to paint – you can put so much into them to define a character. I really enjoyed this one! It's inspired by modelling shows and a video game called Journey."



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SOFTWARE: Photoshop



Illustration student Lee hasn't restricted himself to the medium he's studying – he's also dabbled in texture and sculpture. And even within his field he's tried his hand at everything from traditional painting to logo design. "I've always had an interest in art and love most genres, so my growth as a creative has been quite organic and expansive," he says.

Following his course, Lee's dream job would be as a full-time artist. "My plans after university are to juggle freelance work with a 'normal job' and to eventually (hopefully) go full time," he says.

IMAGINEFX CRIT



"Lee's passion for being creative – whether that's painting, designing or sculpting – is evident in both of these illustrations. He does decorative and symbolic, and I love the idea of all those animals backing up the Runner."
Beren Neale
Digital Editor

RUNNER "An editorial piece that observes the athletic ability of the runner. I chose a variety of animals to represent different traits of the elite athlete: a wolf for strength, a fox for cunning and so on."

SAMURAI "Currently a decorative piece that's part of an ongoing project, which represents ancient masks and the culture associated with them. This one looked at the Samurai and how the Japanese have very specific meanings to each mask."

Reader FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART

Julian Kok

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SOFTWARE: Photoshop

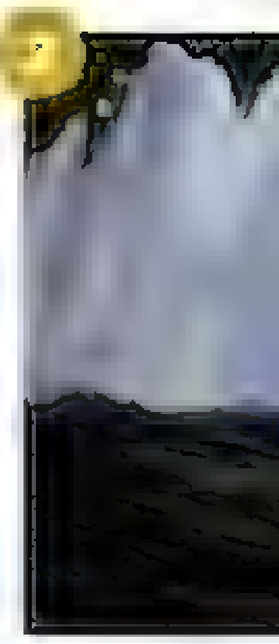


In a twist on the standard career path, Julian's career began in TV and commercials, where he created storyboards. However, he soon realised that his strengths lay in creating concept art for the games industry. "That's how I ended up at LucasArts, where I enjoyed most of the creative process," he says.

From there, Julian has gone on to work freelance on card titles such as Warhammer 40K and The Lord of the Rings. But he has his sights set on b'gger things. "Hopefully in the near future, after gaining much work experience, I'll be able to do set up my own game studio or school to help make the creative industry grow," he says



1



2



3

THE LOST CATHEDRAL "In this personal piece I incorporated fantasy Gothic architecture with a little storytelling. A group of three adventurers have become lost and discovered this huge cathedral. What's hidden inside is still a mystery."

LOST TEMPLE "I'm always fascinated with the results of just brushwork alone, especially on architecture, so I created this piece without photo textures. I try to work on dramatic composition with first, second and third focal points."

DAMASCUS "Here I tried to 'rebuild' the Temple of Jupiter in Damascus as it would have looked after a war with the Romans. While working on this, I wondered how it could turn into a game environment, so I played around with various scales for the characters."

SEA ANCIENT "It had been a while since I'd painted creatures, so this was a bit of a test. I started blocking out shapes with a big chalk brush. The old ships implanted on his back suggest that they're painfully growing out of him, and I added the chains at the last minute to draw the eye towards them."







"Julian's work is sweeping and ambitious. But his grand scenes of ruinous cathedrals and ancient civilisations are also exercises in subtlety, full of detail. I love Sea Ancient: like a nightmarish reimagining of Moby Dick."

Gary Tyrrell
Staff Writer

Reader Posé

Jack Holliday

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Photoshop



Jack's art is influenced by three things: "History, literature and death metal." He's been studying for a degree in illustration at Birmingham's Institute of Art and Design, and has spent the past few months creating a portfolio of work to show to prospective directors. More importantly, it "shows progression and development of my creative skills," according to Jack.

Recent developments are a good omen for the future: Jack graduated with first class honours. "I was also nominated and won a Vaughan Oliver award for my illustrations at my university's awards evening," he says proudly. Good work, Jack.

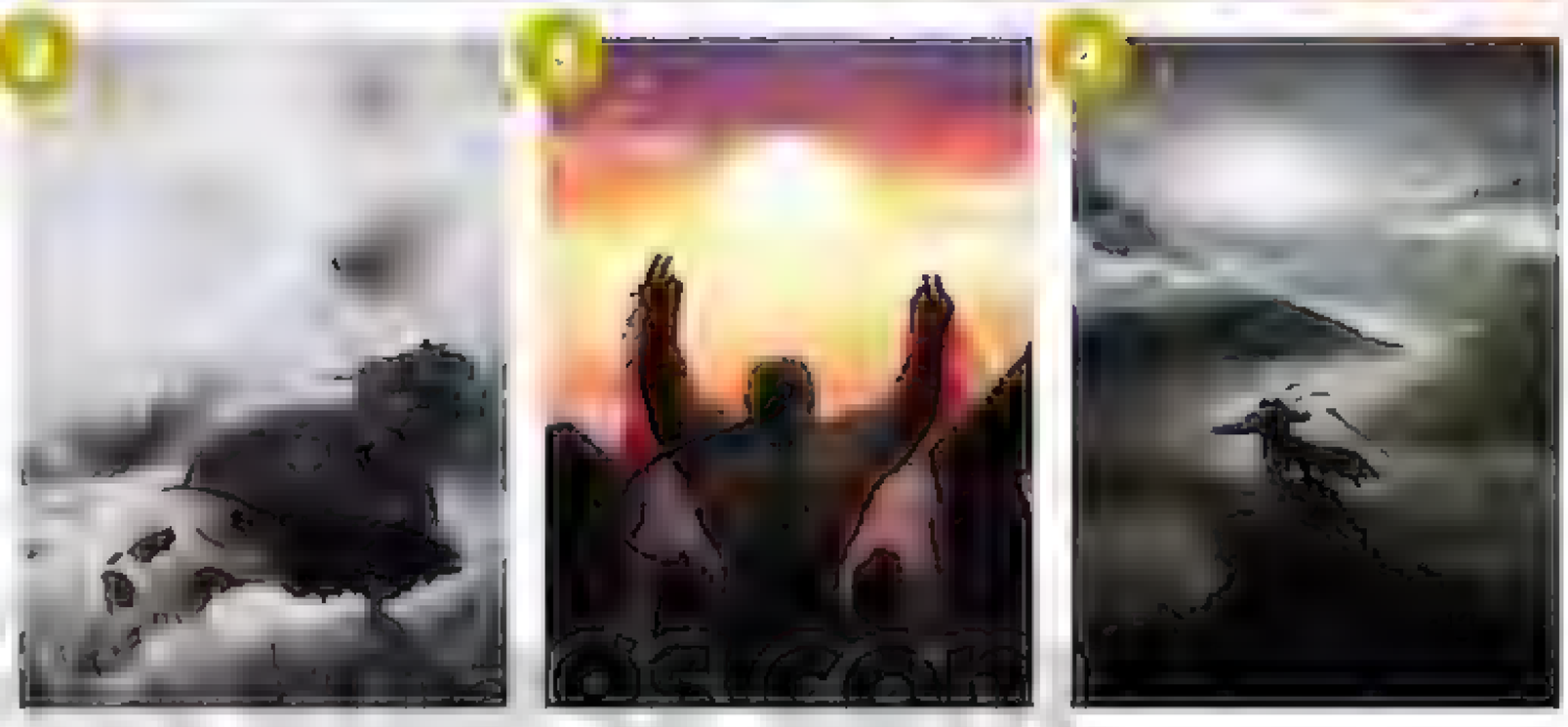


DRAGON SHOWDOWN "Painted during the closing weeks of my degree I was shocked to discover that I had no dragons in my portfolio, so whereas other images had levels of sophistication and undertones, this was more an indulgence of clichéd fantasy art because, well, why not?"

BLOOD ON SNOW "This was painted with the intent on of trying to show the devastation wrought in the Second World War without resorting to unnecessary levels of gore. I tried to maintain a more introspective and philosophical angle."

SUN GOD'S WRATH "I've always had a fascination with the Dark Ages, especially in Britain, where such edifices as Stonehenge and Sutton Hoo dot the landscape. This, crossed with the imagery in the bloodthirsty Nordic sagas of the time, I find continuously inspirational – this image being one of many results.

IN THESE HILLS "This is an illustration of the song In These Hills by metal band Northern Oak. The song itself is concerned with the despair and anguish felt by the protagonist upon the death of his wife. I tried to distil this feeling of desolation into the image, with a hefty load of inspiration from Caspar David Friedrich."





Leroy van Vliet
The Netherlands
www.leroyart.com
leroyvanvliet@gmail.com
Photoshop

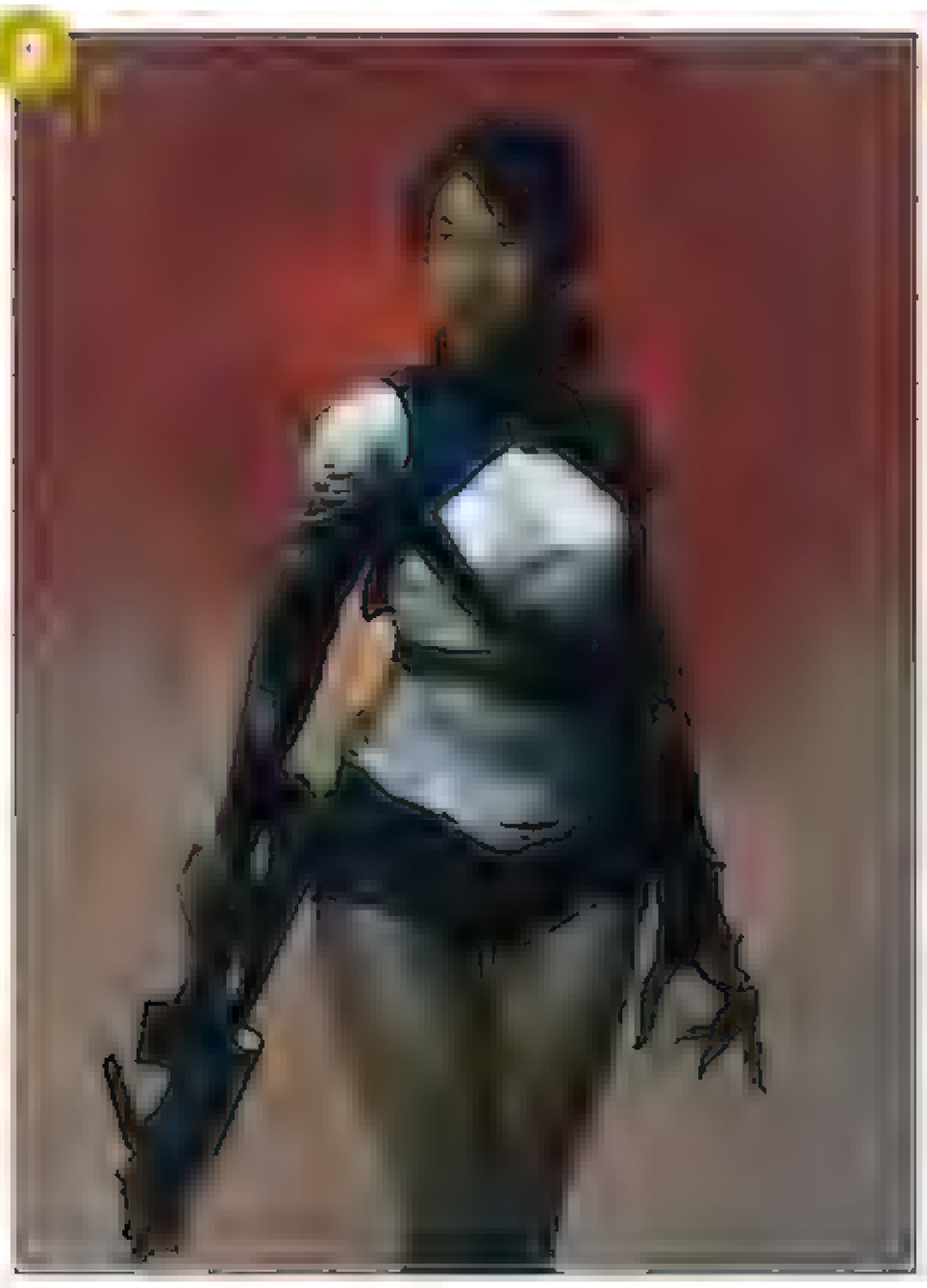


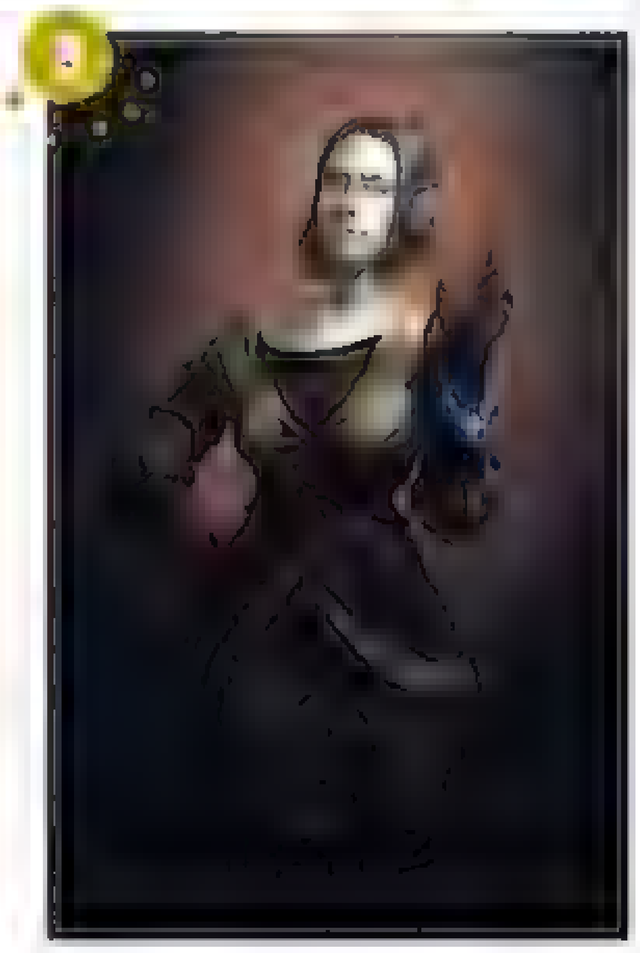
Here at ImagineFX we get a lot of stories of mature comics and anime influencing our favourite artists as children. But no one's ever mentioned Donald Duck as inspiration... until now. "As a kid, I loved to read Donald Duck comics," says Dutch artist Leroy. "I was inspired by the eccentric inventor character Gyro Gearloose to use drawing as a tool to create my own inventions."

Despite his light-hearted beginnings, Leroy's style is quite beautiful in a brooding, murky way. "I love the process of taking knowledge about the real universe we live in and channeling it into a picture," he says



"Leroy uses loose, Photoshop brush strokes in the background of his images to great advantage. This has really helped his characters come to the foreground of the scene and gives his painting a rich, ethereal quality."





DUSK "This image was inspired by the sombre and mysterious atmosphere that pervades the in-game world of Dark Souls. I used strong lighting combined with fog to provide contrasts at an ordinarily very dark time of day, and the geese that are taking flight to convey a sense of motion."

THE STARBOUND OUTLAW "The objective of this illustration was to depict an outlaw character from the future where spaceflight and cybernetic implants are commonplace. For her outfit I wanted to go with something that was tattered, yet functional enough to show that she's a career criminal."

THIEF "The costume I chose for this character is relatively simple and functional. I wanted to contrast this with the fancy glowing necklace and her stance to imply she probably didn't obtain the necklace through legitimate means. The background is lit behind her upper body to highlight her gesture further."

Reader Posé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART

Pedro Fernandes

England
www.arqui9.com
arq.pedrofernandes@gmail.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop, 3ds Max



Pedro's day job involves popping into some of London's leading architectural studios as a freelancer, where he comes up with 3D visualisations of new buildings and places. Closely related to this is a passion for creating cityscapes, which hyper-realistically blend real-world locales with sci-fi themes.

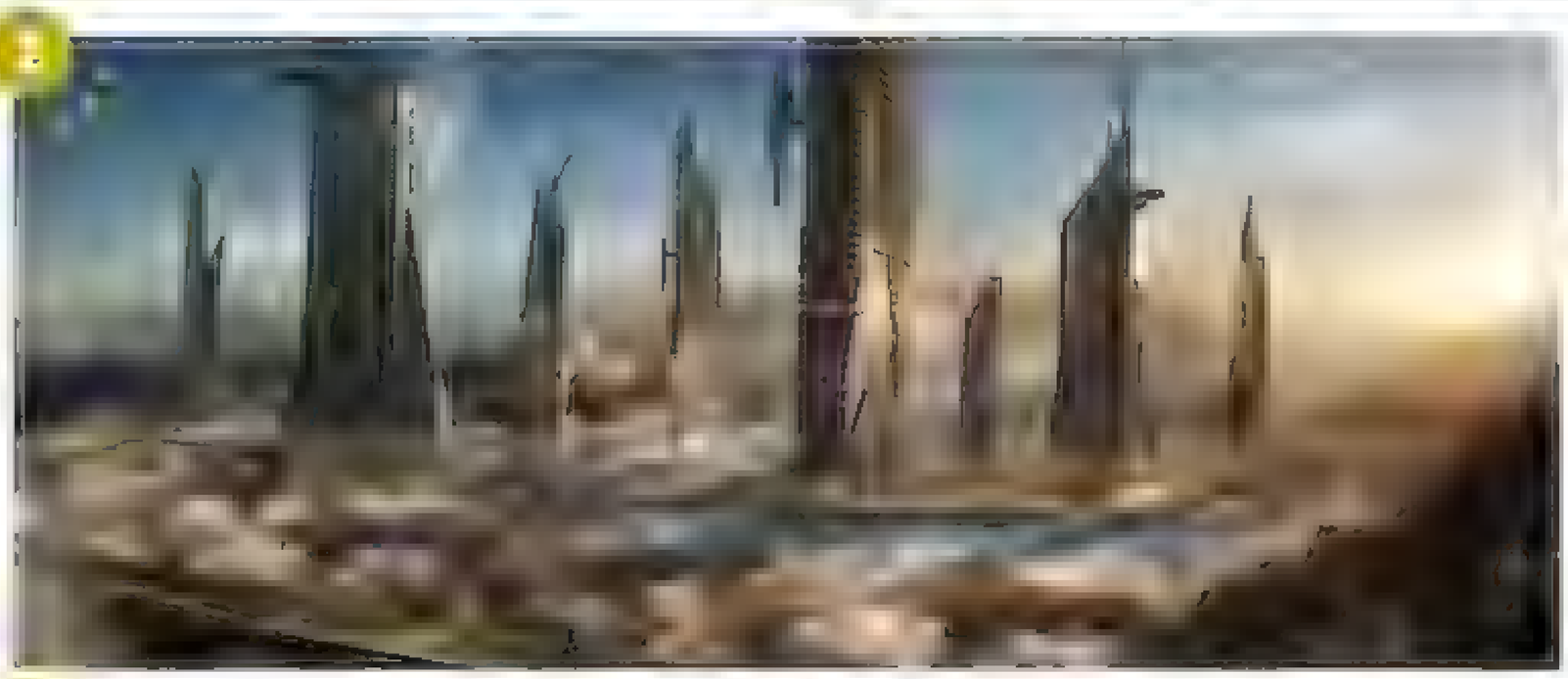
"I love the opportunity to work on the latest and greatest works from architects," Pedro says. "But I also take personal time to work on some of my own 'inspired' works from the great digital art I see online every day. I'm always looking to create something a little different in the visualisation field."



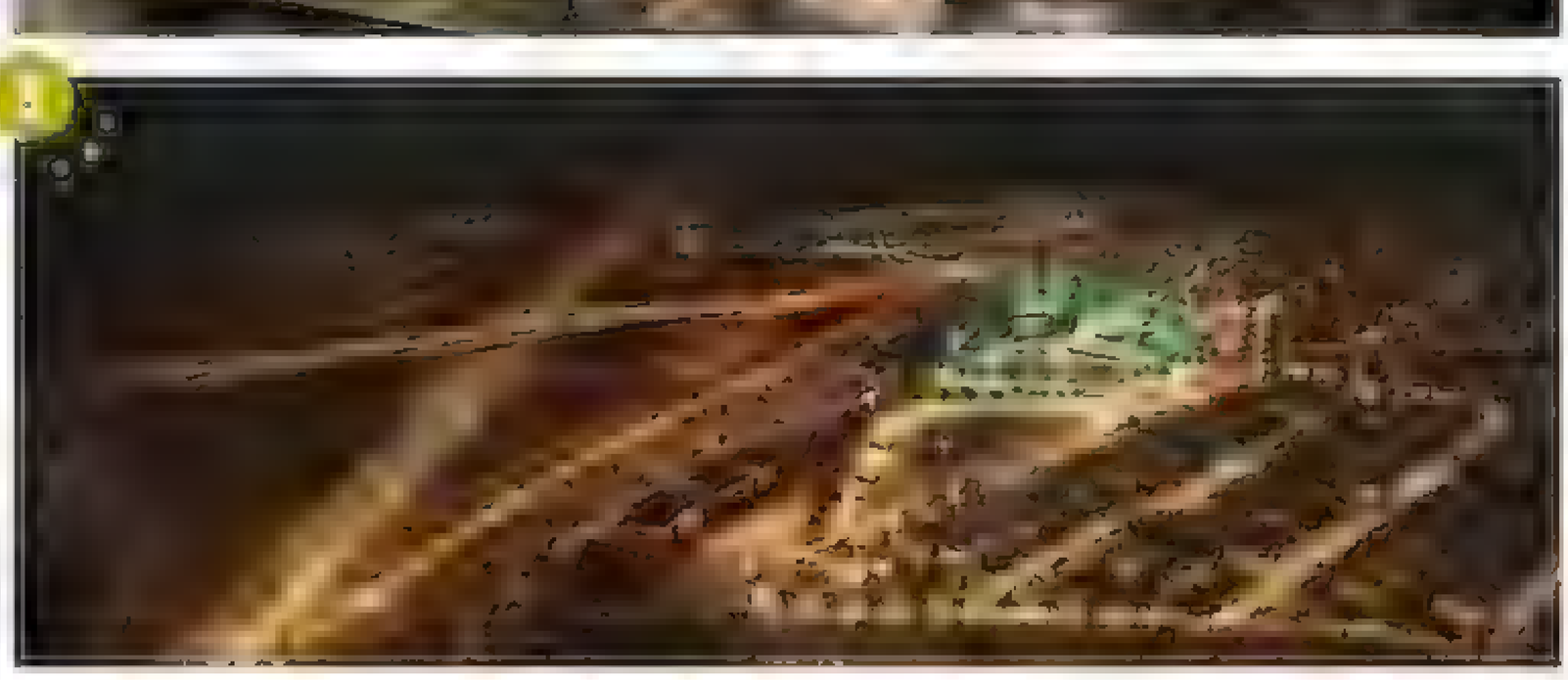
"I love how Pedro has mixed his architectural background with a sci-fi theme. He has an amazing eye for detail and has really captured the stark environments that these imposing buildings are situated in."



1 EXPLORATION EXPLOITATION
"This was one of my very first full-on sci-fi matte paintings. I juxtaposed Middle East-style towers and pipelines with a harsh Arctic environment, then tilted the angle and added overexposure to create a realistic vision of the future."



2 JOURNEY "The inspiration for this piece comes from the time I spend looking at skyscrapers from the plush offices of London architectural firms. I drew a tiny figure in the foreground to give a sense of scale – and to add a little story."



3 PROFESSIONAL MATTE "This is a painting created for F10 Studios, which is a creative visualisation studio in Brighton. It shows how I blend matte techniques with real-world locations and proposed buildings."

4 2110 BRASILIA "This is the way I imagine Brazil in 100 years time. The clean, shiny surfaces were a joy to create, and there's a sly nod to Ridley Scott's Prometheus in the background. Maybe I'll be living here in 2110."





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Send up to five pieces of your work, along with their titles, an explanation of your techniques, a photo of yourself and contact details. Images should be sent as 300DPI JPEG files.

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ARTIST NEWS, SOFTWARE & EVENTS
ImagineNation
AT THE CORE OF THE FANTASY ART COMMUNITY





WASH AND GO BACK IN TIME

James Gurney set a competition that combined Art Nouveau and an imaginary shampoo brand. The results were hair-raisingly good

Page 23



SPIRITED AWAY

Studio Ghibli founder Hayao Miyazaki is hanging up his crayons and retiring after his latest animated masterpiece The Wind Rises hits the cinemas

Page 24



BALANCING WORK 'N' LIFE

Mark Molnar's clean rented studio is the result of him liking the day job too much. Painting dread fantasy art can certainly become addictive!

Page 26

Fantasy art is best in show

Fantasy focus Tired of seeing artists treated as an afterthought at large conventions, the founders of IlluXCon created an ever-increasing popular event where the art takes centre stage…

A knock-on effect of the snowball-like growth of comic, fantasy and game art in popular media is the ever-growing number of shows and conventions that have sprung up around them. These massive events have become big businesses in themselves, but traditional fantasy artists, whose importance to the industry is not to be underestimated, often find themselves overshadowed by the latest movie trailers or hands-on demos.

"Artists were lamenting the fact tha



most of the t m [illegible] add ons to the show a best s d show d sp ays at wors sa s Pa r c k W shire who co founded he [illegible] xCon even

In 2008 w [illegible] this w fe [illegible] as the on y s how n the wor d ded cated to [illegible] ant asy ar [illegible] and dea p e s relat ve y sma scal [illegible] t s become renowned and revered in art s c r c es Th s y ear the convent on moved to a ne v host town A e town

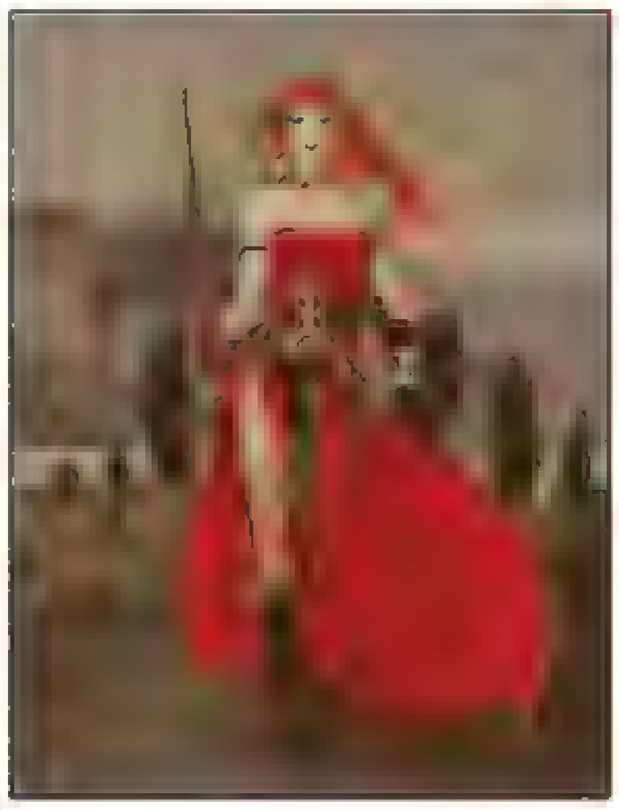
> **IlluXCon was to be a show that the artists enjoyed as much as the attendees**

Penns y vania [illegible] ndu str y egends Ch s Moore and Ch s Ach eos were among the many art stars n attendance

The whole po nt of star ng [illegible] uXCon was to create a show that the ar s s enjoyed as muc as the a tendees ope that would provide them w th the ins p ration they needed to push forward w th their own wor [illegible] say s Patr c k As time goes on [illegible] uXCon becomes ess and less ke a convention and more and more ke a five-day ga ery open ng reception When major art s s start show ng up at [illegible] uXCon w th



Despite its techno-fetishism, Anthony Palumbo's painting was created simply with oil on wood. It looked even b... in the flesh at IlluXCon



Industry legend Chris Achilleos exhibited at IlluXCon. This piece was commissioned for the show

ANDY BRASE

The penciller and ink liner discusses his work with IlluXCon

How did your involvement in IlluXCon come about?
Pat Wilshire, who runs the event, asked if I'd be interested in IlluXCon. He actually contacted me for the very first IlluXCon a number of years back, but I unfortunately couldn't make it back then. This was my first year at the show.

What makes the event unique?
I like that its focus is on traditional and original art. In the digital age, I think it's important to have a show that keeps the spirit of original works alive. However, seeing original art, pencil or ink on paper or paint on canvas, is something that can't be replicated by printed works. I recently saw some of the original Frank Frazetta iconic paintings and was surprised by how much better these look in reality. The printed versions look great, but they still don't compare to seeing the paint or lines Frank put down.

Can you tell us what you exhibited at the show?
I had more original work on display than I ever do at typical comic conventions. I've managed to hold on to some of my favourite pieces. Some of my covers and private commissions have made their way into private art collections, but I had various prints available and a few copies of a sketchbook left.

What do you think people will gain by going to IlluXCon 2014?
If you're an art and illustration fan or aspiring young artist, then this is a show that's dedicated to art. There'll be original art to look at and very skilled artists to talk with about creating art or the business. It should be an exciting time for all!



Andy's most recent work includes covers for Neil Gaiman and George RR Martin's stories

www.andybrase.blogspot.com

Continued from previous page...



David Palumbo's image is a mere hint of the kind of art Darren creates

O f course, as we know, not everything is working. Among those who exhibited her work was Daren Bader (see page 54 for our interview with him). Daren works as an art director at Rockstar but pursues freelance illustration in his spare time. He was attracted by the laid-back atmosphere and has attended every year since it started. He believes it's appealing for new artists as it's for collectors.



"If you're a collector you gain access to amazing original artwork and can talk to the artists in a casual atmosphere," Daren says. "If you're an artist you get inspiration from seeing some of the best fantasy art and artists in the world. It's such a positive experience to spend a few days seeing old friends, making new ones and becoming inspired by the talent at the show."

While Illux Con's success is great for both artists and fans, it's never going to become a grand Comic-Con style affair, and that's a good thing. For them to have a successful show, the artists need to sell art, Patrick says. "We would not want to bring in more artists than the collector population will support – otherwise you just end up with more artists attending the show and losing money every year."

Before the doors even closed on this year's event, Patrick and Jeanne have already started planning for Illux Con 2014. Keep an eye on **www.illuxcon.com** for more information soon.

Till death do us art

A new movie puts a unique spin on the buddy cop genre, with the help of US character designer Mauricio Ruiz

When a high-flying young cop (Ryan Reynolds) is gunned down in the line of duty, he's invited to join a team of undead police officers known as the Rest In Peace Department. Partnered with a sharp-tongued veteran sheriff played by Jeff Bridges, his job is to protect the living from those who refuse to pass peacefully into the afterlife, all the while hunting for his killer.

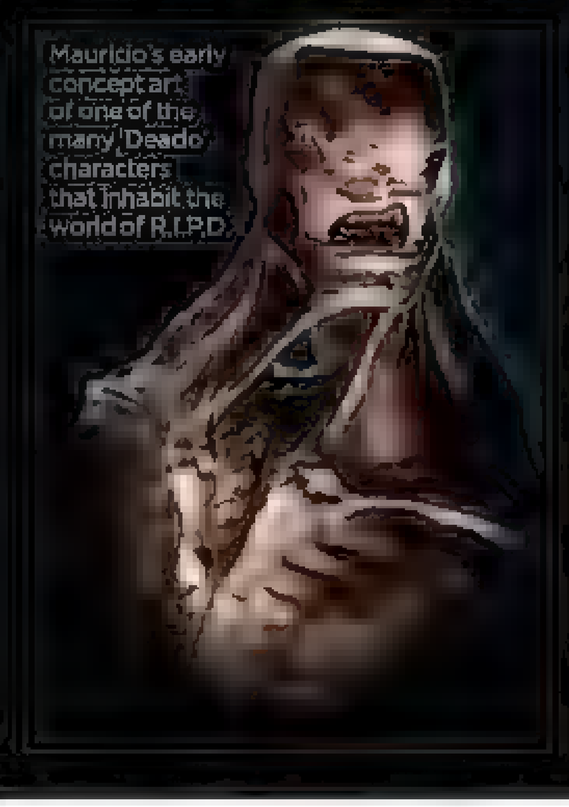


"The design brief," Mauricio Ruiz says of the film R.I.P.D., "shifted from disfigured and hole-ridden cadavers to emotive, personality-driven characters." The Los Angeles-based creative [illegible] the overall look and feel of the Universal Pictures production, creating an army of disfigured and deformed miscreants for Nick and Roy to bring to supernatural justice.

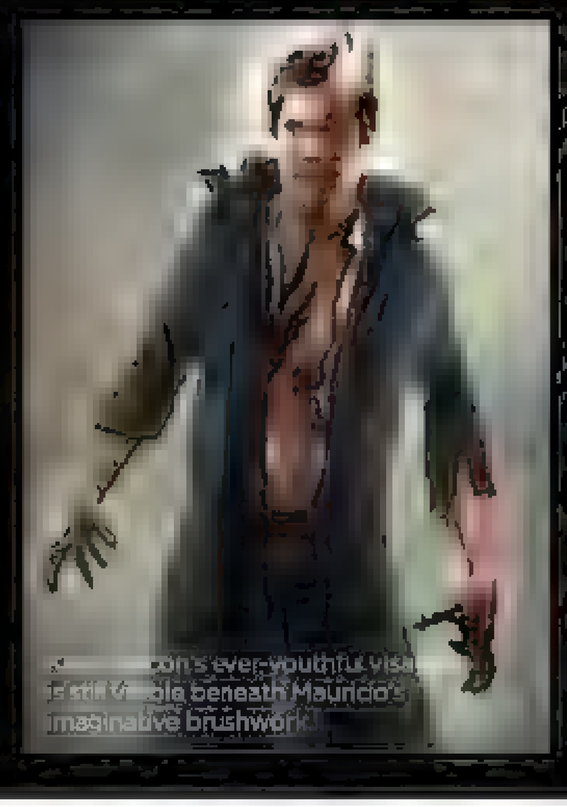
With such a diverse array of characters on show, can Mauricio pick out a favourite?

"Hayes, the film's antagonist, played by Kevin Bacon, is definitely my favourite. I invested the most time into him – developing 50-plus iterations of his design – before he made it to the screen."

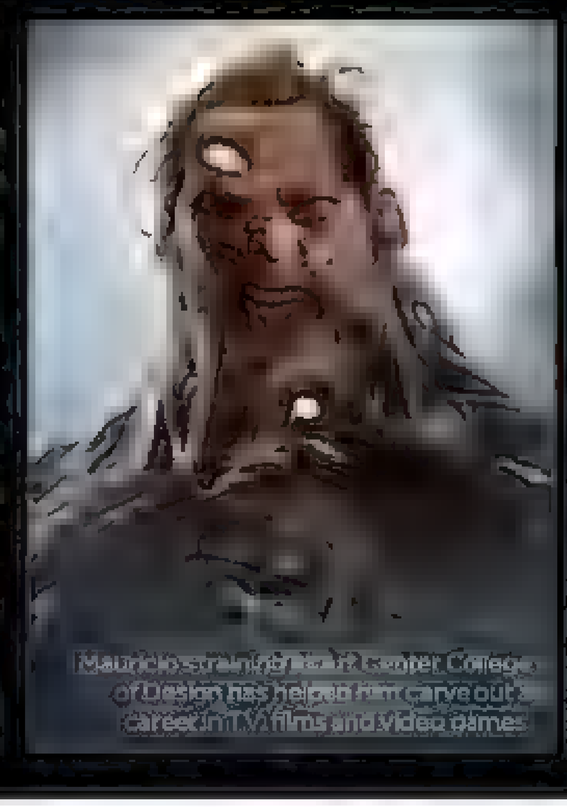
R.I.P.D. is in cinemas in the US and UK now. See much more of Mauricio's character art for the film, and his portfolio [illegible]



Mauricio's early concept art of one of the many 'Deado' characters that inhabit the world of R.I.P.D.



[illegible]con's ever-youthful visage is still visible beneath Mauricio's imaginative brushwork.



Mauricio's training at the Art Center College of Design has helped him carve out a career in TV, films and video games.

In the money

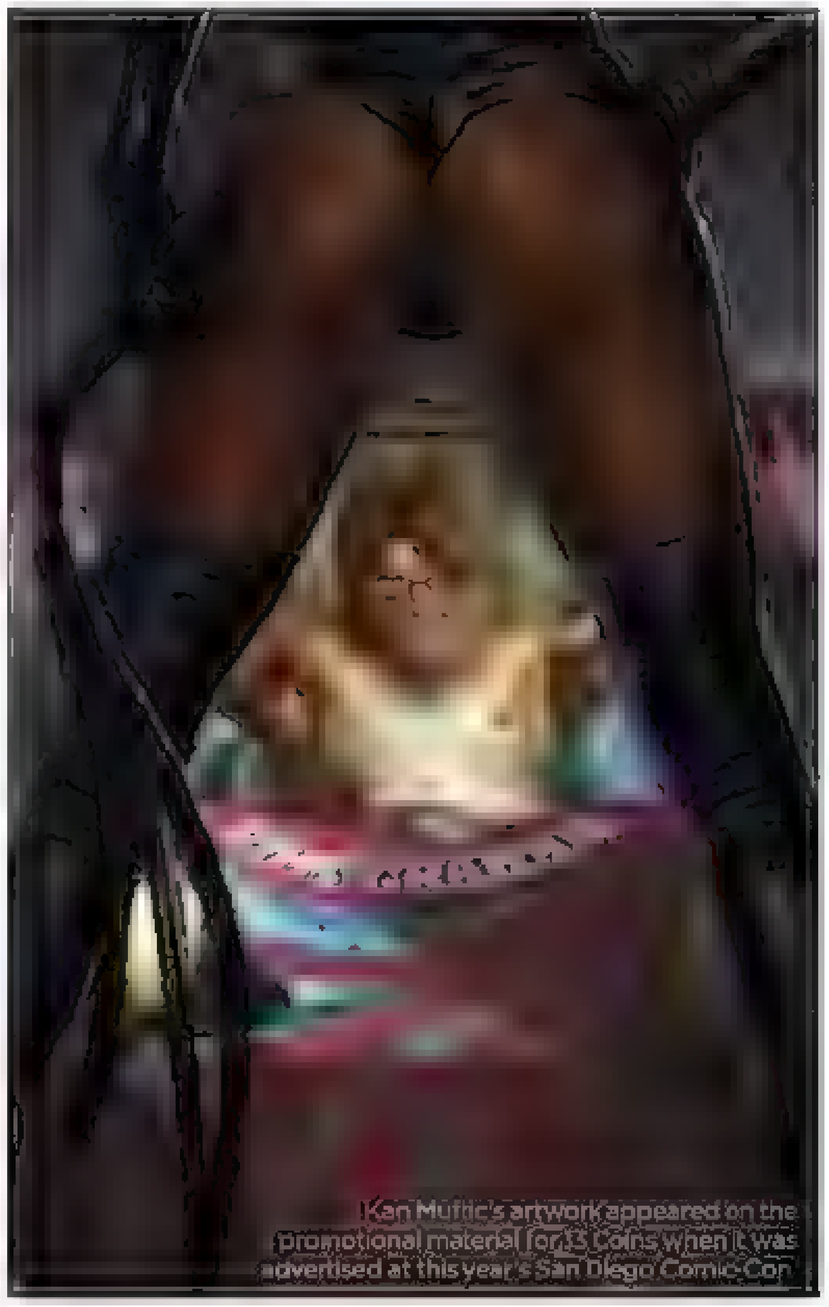
Group effort Kan Muftic reveals what it's like working with Simon Bisley for the comic series 13 Coins

13 Coins is a six-issue comic published by Corinthian Productions. It's written by Martin Brennan and Michael Jackson, and pencilled by Simon Bisley. London-based artist Kan Muftic is one of a team of leading artists brought in to collaborate on the project.

My style is quite different from Bisley's," Kan says. "So it gives a slightly different angle on the characters. His drawings are so full of raw physical power, whereas mine are rather moody. I wouldn't even dare trying to mimic what he does. No one can. Kan is used to working on such joint projects, having previously been part of the art teams for Batman: Arkham Asylum and Arkham City. He says 13 Coins promises a "rich universe full of exciting stories, populated by great characters. It's not just your regular comic book, but a much more interactive web-based experience that will be available for your iPad."



Upon completion, new artwork and features at the ever-conflict between groups descended from angels. An ex-con becomes involved when both sides discover he "contains the blood of angels" and attempt to recruit him. But which will he choose? Find out more at **www.facebook.com/13coinscomic**



Ken Muftic's artwork appeared on the promotional material for 13 Coins when it was advertised at this year's San Diego Comic-Con

Mucha in "what if..." mashup

Mane event The results are in for James Gurney's Art Nouveau-inspired design competition...



In a recent illustration for his fictional utopia series Dinotopia, James Gurney imagined how a Tyrannosaurus would look if it were designed in the style of a Chinese parade dragon. The completed piece is stunning, alive with colour and meticulous in detail. It also gave the artist and author an idea for a contest.

How would an Art Nouveau designer – Alphonse Mucha or Henri Privat-Livemont for example – design a label for an imaginary product called Lionfish Shampoo? That was the challenge he set readers of his regularly updated blog, Gurney Journey (**www.gurneyjourney.blogspot.co.uk**)

James originally intended to shortlist five designs. The quality of entries was so high however, that he could only narrow down the field to 10, before putting it to a public

> **I imagined what Mucha would do if a client asked him for a shampoo advertisement**

vote to find the three overall winners Candice Broersma, Katie Small and Michelle Spalding. "I've never seen a contest with such a strong level of entries," James says. "Almost every piece represented some form of growth or breakthrough for artists at all levels."

"I imagined what Mucha would do if a client asked him for a shampoo advertisement," Candice says of her entry. Katie's design, she says, "merges her love of portal shapes and elegant women with "the spirit of the Art Nouveau aesthetic." Completing the winning trio is Michelle, who has always been attracted to the movement's "sensuous, organic lines and nature-inspired motifs and palettes."

Check out more from James Gurney at **www.jamesgurney.com** and read our interviews with each of the winners at **www.imaginefx.com**





Candice Broersma



"I felt truly honoured to have my work alongside other such well-designed and well-executed entries."

Katie Small



"I really love the idea of putting art on a product and have always been influenced by the Art Nouveau aesthetic."

Michelle Spalding



"I wanted the piece to be graphical but without sacrificing the lavish decorative elements of Art Nouveau."



FRESH PAINT

Your art news that's grabbed our attention



Wayne Haag (@ankaris)

"This piece, Yangtze Dream, is a from a private commission. It's oil on 60x24in oil linen."

www.bit.ly/if-ankaris





Nate Knodel (@NateKnodelArt)

"A quick study of Snoqualmie Falls. Two-and-a-half hours of painting and sold on site."

www.bit.ly/ifx-eisakusaku





Tincek Marincek

"I drew this matte painting in seven hours with colours. I didn't set out a concept at the beginning – I just sketched."

www.bit.ly/ifx-simonsherry

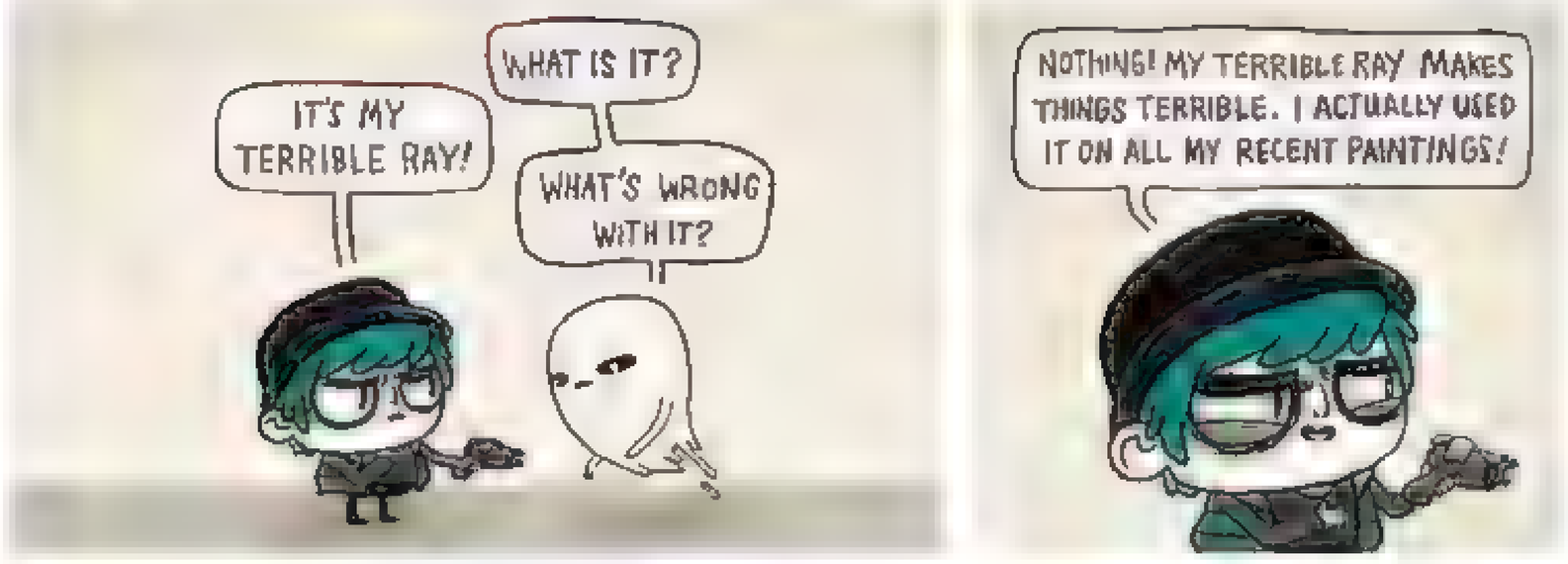


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Hatboy

by Vaughn Pinpin





Fantasy talk Explaining the inexplicable

"I was swimming in an icy river... There were trout swimming below me, and I felt like I was in some kind of secret world."

Daren Bader's dreamlike childhood experiences in the mountains may explain his art style. Page 54

Sayonara, Hayao

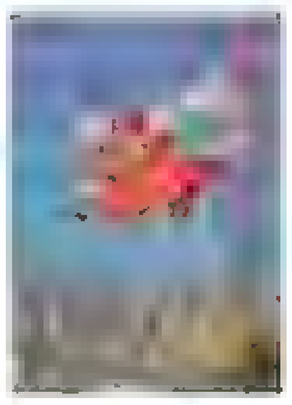
That's all, folks Iconic animator Hayao Miyazaki is retiring from films. We find out why his place in animation history is assured

Hayao Miyazaki, one of animation's most influential, revered and successful directors, has announced his retirement. And this time he means it.

"I know I've said I would retire many times in the past," Hayao said at a news conference announcing the end of a 50-year career. "But this time I am quite serious. This will never happen again."

Hayao's glittering career includes an Academy Award for 2003's Spirited Away and co-founding Japanese animation house Studio Ghibli, the team behind features such as Princess Mononoke and Ponyo.

"I really appreciate his sense of framing," artist and Miyazaki fan Lindsay Cibos says. "Slowing down scenes for quiet reflection or adding a staccato burst for excitement and emotional impact, and especially the degree of care placed on capturing even the smallest moments of life. Hayao Miyazaki is a master storyteller."

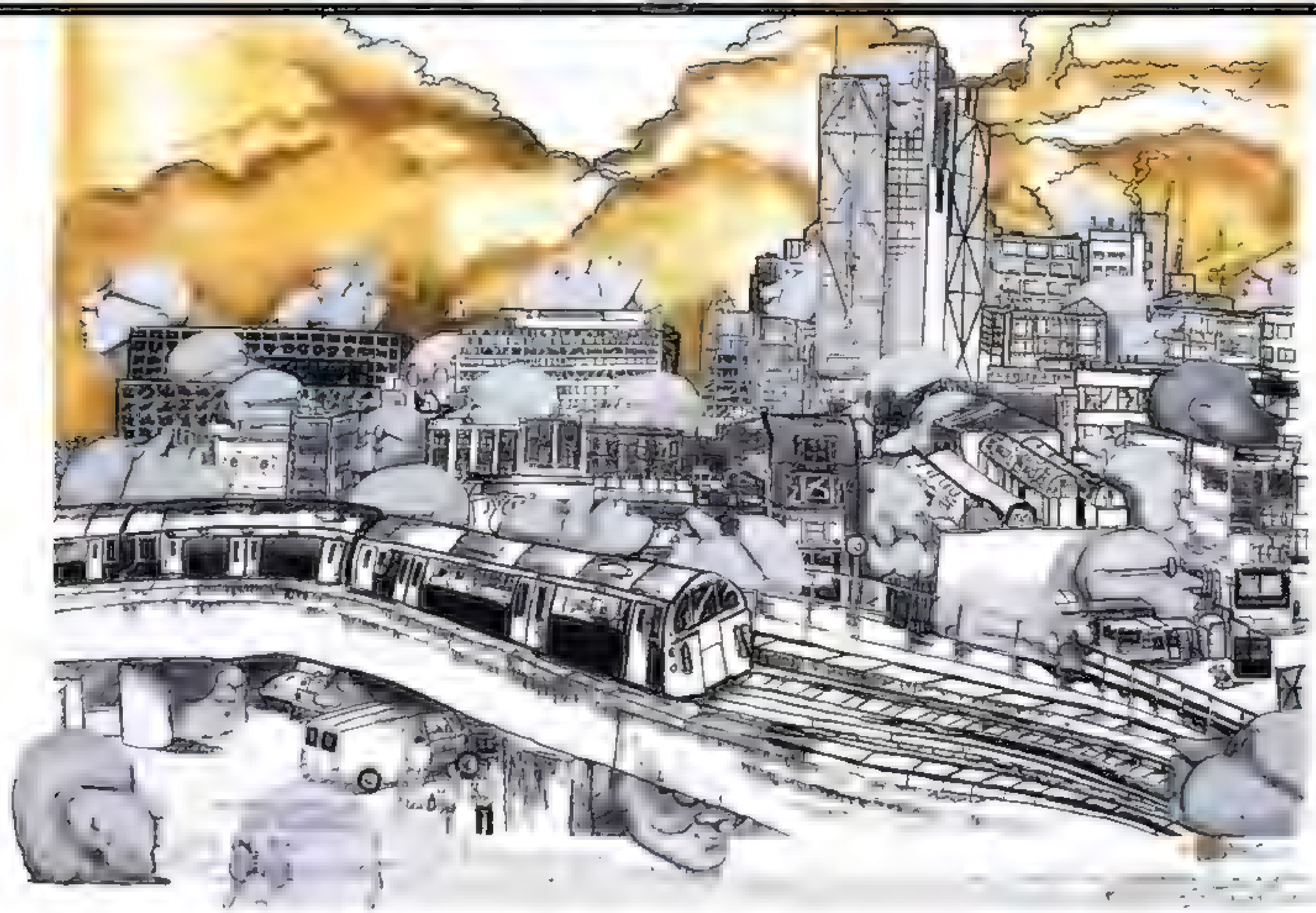


While Miyazaki will continue to work, albeit at a slower pace, he'll stop making features.



Hayao Miyazaki's Spirited Away became the first anime movie to win an American Academy Award.

storemags.com



An artist's best friend

Living dog rough How an ex-con found fame in the art world with the help of his canine sidekick

After spending over two decades in and out of prison, formerly homeless artist John Dolan has just completed an exhibition with some of world's top streets artists. And he did it with the help of his trusty dog George.

The exhibition – entitled George the Dog John the Artist – is the latest in a string of recent successes for John, who began drawing to support himself financially and to avoid the cycle of petty crime and drug abuse he'd fallen into. Over 40 artists have added graffiti to his sketches to create unique, collaborative works.



"The artists were keen to do it and a lot of them identify with John," said gallery owner Howard Griffin. "Because in a sense, he's a true street artist because he's on the streets drawing each day."

Islington-born John has become a recognisable figure on the streets of Shoreditch High Street; he draws kerbside – along with George, whom he credits with turning his life around – documenting the changing face of London's skyline with his indelible ink work.

"The good thing about it," John said, "is that all the homeless guys who sit out on the streets have taken inspiration from what I do. They've started to say they want to change their lives."

After selling early works for just £10, John's sketches now reportedly fetch as much as £15,000 and are sought after by collectors from around the world. ROA, Stik and Thierry Noir are just some of street artists who have collaborated in his most recent collection. To find out more, visit **www.howardgriffingallery.com**



John's work exhibited at the Howard Griffin Gallery

Much of John's work presents familiar London landscapes, stylised in his own particular flavour



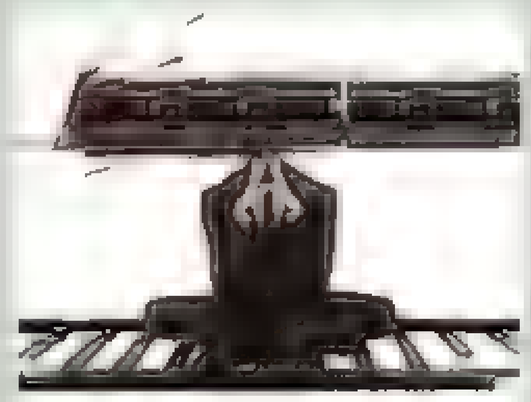
For the exhibition, John collaborated with a variety of street artists including CI25, Zomby and Ronzo (right)



John and George have become a familiar sight on the pavements of Shoreditch

+deviantWATCH

Here are some of the many gems we found on the pages of deviantART...



erebun

www.erebun.deviantart.com

Train of Thought, pictured here, is just one highlight among many in the portfolio of Malaysia-based digital and traditional artist erebun. This is a gloriously dark, twisted and humorous body of work that's as smart and stylish as it is bloody and violent. Spend an hour browsing – we did!



conceptfox

www.conceptfox.deviantart.com

With a gallery full of epic landscapes, all demonstrating a keen eye for lighting, composition and perspective, traditional artist conceptfox is definitely one to watch. Her gallery also contains some top-drawer portraits and a wealth of fan art, showcasing the artist's far-reaching talents.



Ev-sta

www.ev-sta.deviantart.com

This untitled piece by Ev-sta shows the American's appetite for the surreal, setting an elegant and understated drawing against geometric shapes. View his gallery and you'll see an artist proficient in numerous techniques and styles, all underpinned by an element of the other-world.y



ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

Mark Molnar

Fresh start The Hungary-based concept artist and illustrator explains how moving his workspace helped beat his addiction to the job



People think freelance artists are like bohemian hermits; they work when they want, sitting in front of the computer or easel in their underwear, sipping a glass of wine.

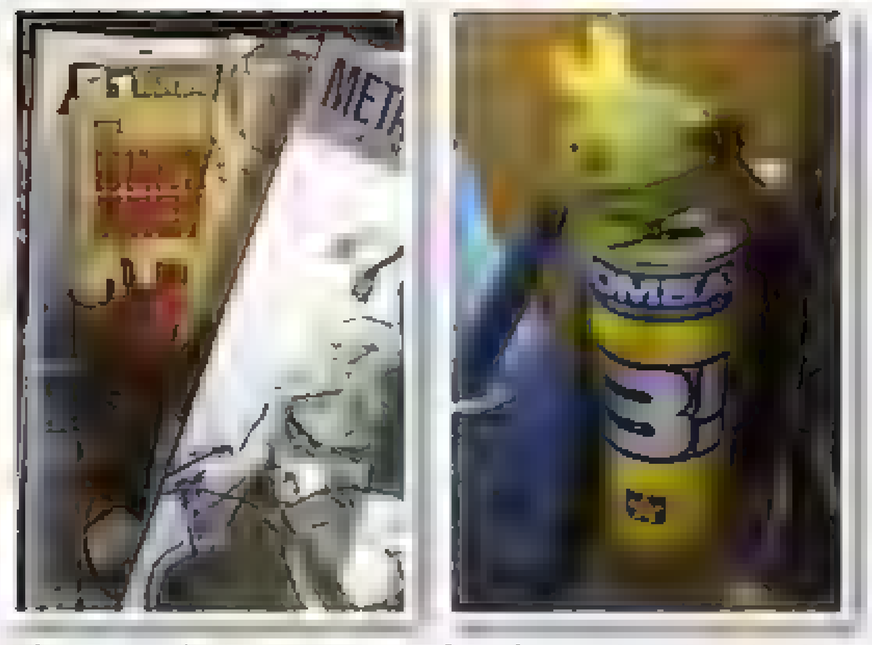
For me, this couldn't be further from the truth. I've always tried to work office hours. My problem wasn't that I became easily distracted, but rather I worked too [illegible]

There was no distinction between my work life and private life. So, I now rent a downtown studio with four other designers.

For the first three years of my career I used the cheapest Genius tablet I could find. It's pointless buying the most expensive gear when you're starting out as it won't make you a better artist. I suggest spending your money on tutorials and classes so you have a good [illegible]

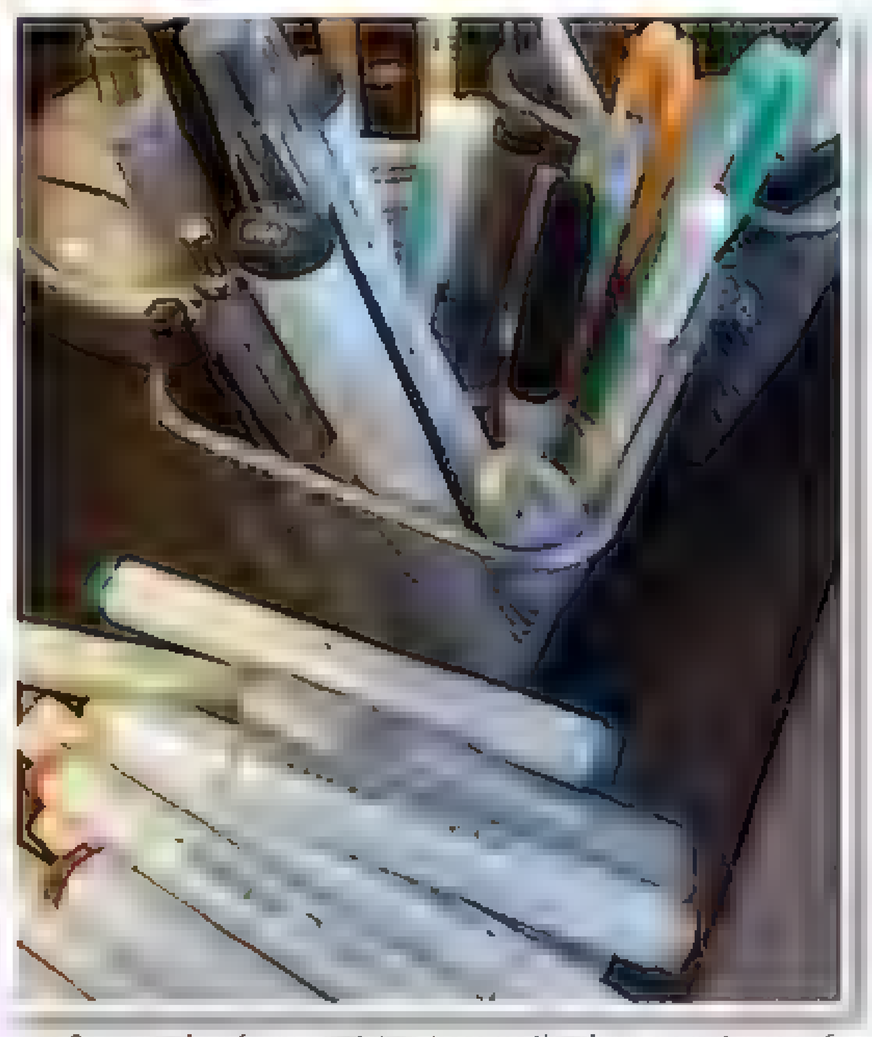
Some artists like to work in complete silence, but music is an important trigger in my creative work. And for quality music listening you need gigantic speakers, of course





I also love to collect magazines and comics. I have a whole pack in my studio's kitchen to flip through for a bit of inspiration during lunch.

Two of my most precious objects: my emergency energy drink and my lucky charm frog king, which I got from one of my best friends.



I use Copic markers for my sketches, because they have a great range of colours and it's easy to build up decent value ranges with them

Along with my current digital setup, I also use sketchbooks with mechanical pencils and markers to come up with new ideas. These tools are always in my bag – you can't beat drawing with pencil and paper.

I used to have a big pinboard above my desk, with all sorts of inspiring images around me. Over time, my workspace has become cleaner and I've eliminated every distraction. I'm always working on multiple projects, and have to jump between PS genres and even artistic styles. Surrounding myself with inspiring sci-fi images would proved distracting when I came to work on more a cartoony, animated film for kids.

These days I have a clean wall behind my desk and prefer to take time to find inspiration in my library – both online and offline – before starting a project. This keeps me feeling fresh and prevents me mixing of visual projects. I have running parallel

Mark works in all aspects of the entertainment industry, including film, animation and games. See more at www.markwalmur.com.



During my free time, I usually produce sketches for my personal projects. This is a bio-mechanical creature who features in a pitch for an animated series.

FANTASY SCI-FI DIGITAL ART

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PRESENTS

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The Sigma SD1 packs a lot into its relatively small body. It sports a 46-megapixel Foveon X3 sensor, which helps you capture every little detail, and its 7.5cm LCD monitor makes your images look bright and crisp. It also offers exceptional image quality, and is especially good at low ISO. It's got a strong, weather-resistant magnesium-alloy body, comes complete with the Sigma 17-50mm OS Kit lens, and retails at £2,150.



Hauppauge HD PVR 2 GF Plus



Avenger Hawk 4



Avenger Armadillo



Black & Rubber Standard and Water Resistant Rubber Strappers



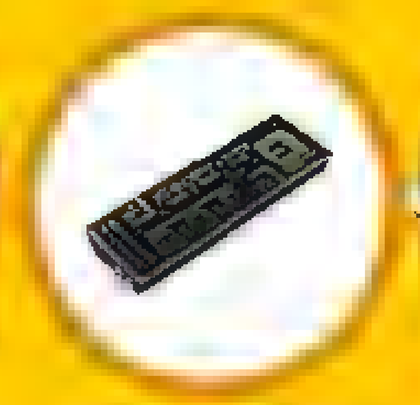
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ImagineFX Forum

Winners

Image of the month

Dinosaurs have never been known for their grace – that is, until Dominick Critelli put a velociraptor in a bespoke suit…



Congratulations Dominick – you've won two ImagineFX specials of your choice! To get your hands on similar prizes, see our Forum challenges at http://community.imaginefx.com/forums.



The Dapper Raptor is a dinosaur that oozes cool – a reptile whose sartorial style falls somewhere between a Mafiosi and the Monopoly man. The character is a creation from the mind of Dominick Critelli.

" had the mage in my head as soon as read the challenge to me. Dominick says, which sounds fair to me.

When the artist says there are a few things he'd like to work on, he's particularly pleased with the colour scheme – the blues working well against the reddish brownish skin and the hot pink shirt. But ultimately, the raptor's success depended on him having the right mix of confidence and swagger.

tried to instil as much attitude into the character as possible. He's a sophisticated gentleman in a world of primitive beasts, and he knows it.

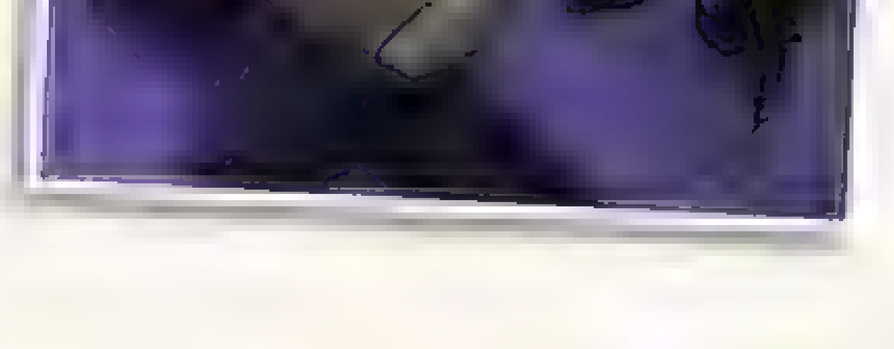
The Dapper Raptor
Dominick Critelli (dominickcalvert)
www.bit.ly/ifx-dominick
www.bit.ly/ifx-dapperraptor





The earliest versions saw the dapper dino quaffing a glass of vino. Spot the sophisticated pinkie poking out!

Something was missing from the image, but a quick flip suggested that perhaps the wine was a little out of place





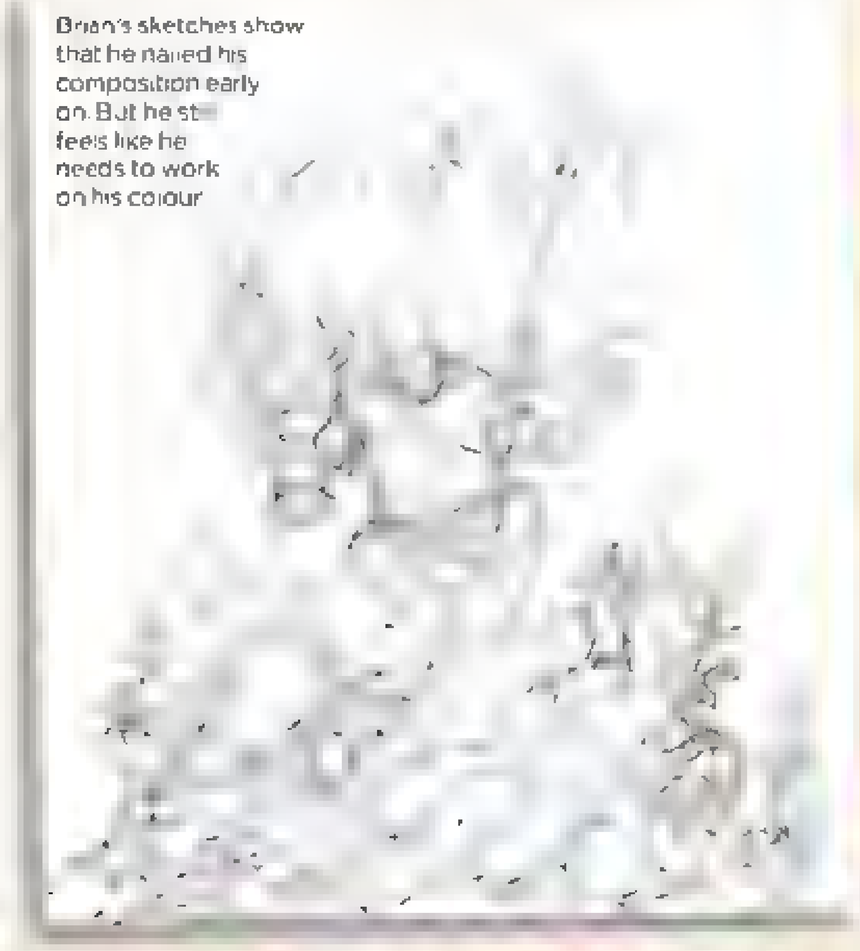
"Another good piece. The only thing I find distracting about it is his hat, which seems to not quite match the tones in the rest of the picture."

Join in!
www.imaginefx.com/forums

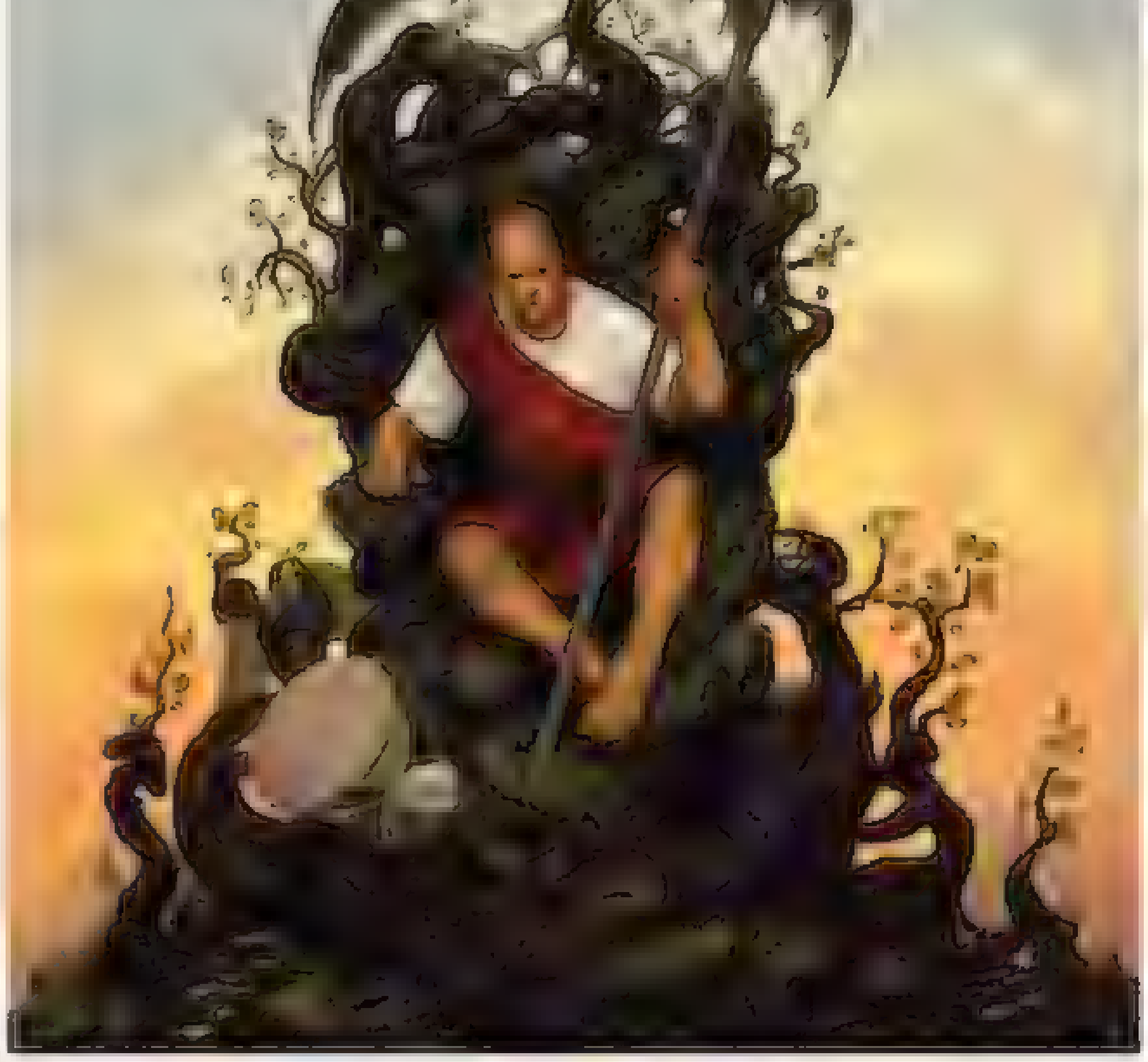
Father Time
Brian Johnson (bsj)
www.bit.ly/ifx-bsj
www.bit.ly/ixf-fathertime



"I've always loved mythology. I wanted to keep the composition and the character rather simple, but really explore colour. Colour can be a struggle for me, so taking the opportunity to experiment with a more vibrant palette was a ton of fun. If I had more time I would have refined the figure. His values need to be pushed, and the level of detail falls short of the rest of the piece. I was also aiming to have more dramatic lighting, but I didn't manage my time very well. I was hoping to convey a strong, self-assured character, who's confident he will ultimately be victorious. It was a great learning experience, and I look forward to future challenges."



Brian's sketches show that he nailed his composition early on. But he still feels like he needs to work on his colour





Predator! Steampunk Style
Xia Moua
www.bit.ly/ifx-xia
www.bit.ly/ifx-predatorsteampunkstyle



"I'm a big fan of Predator. The challenge theme gave me some abstract ideas that would later form the image through a series of concepts and compositions. I assume Predators love challenges, based on their hunting rituals, so one of the scenarios that would make sense for this predator was to abandon all futuristic or alien weaponry and adopt the technology of the steampunk universe. I threw in ninjas to give him an extra challenge. I have a tendency to use warm colours. In this piece they work well to light and frame the characters from behind, almost silhouetting them."



Xia's warm colours created enough bounced, ambient light to detail the characters. His ninjas are cool, too

Letters

YOUR FEEDBACK & OPINIONS



Contact the editor, Claire Howlett, on claire@imaginefx.com or write to ImagineFX, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW, UK

Follow us on twitter: www.twitter.com/imaginefx

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HD videos please

I felt very disappointed when viewing Genzoman's video tutorial from issue 100 because of the truncation of Photoshop windows from the video frame. The video only shows the central part of the screen – that is the drawing itself – leaving important windows (such as levels and brush windows) outside of the frame. But why? This makes it really difficult to understand the painting process and what the artist is doing.

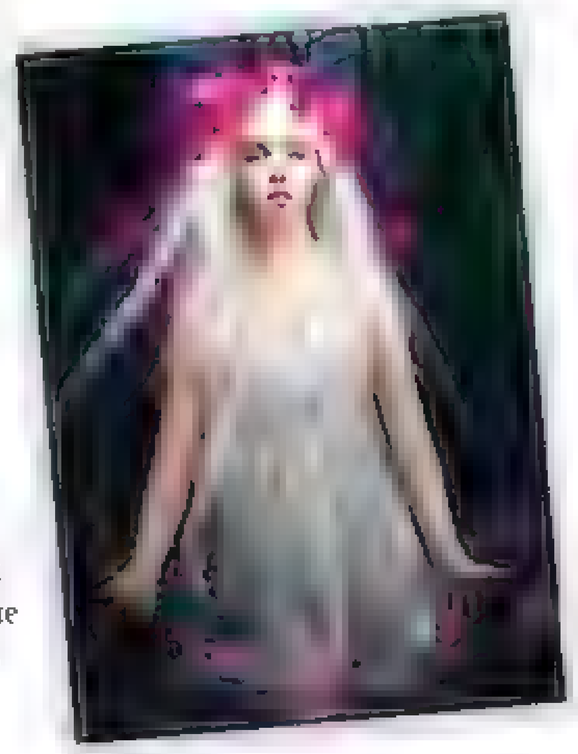
I had another disappointment with Marta Dahlig's video tutorial from the same issue. This time the screen is okay, showing all the elements of the program console, but… the resolution is so low that again it's impossible to learn something from this video tutorial! Please, do not truncate the screen frame of the Photoshop interface and windows, and also take care to use high-definition video recording so we can read the windows and levels names. Audio is very important too, otherwise the tutorials will be completely useless for us beginners.
Massimo Maugiarotti, Milan, Italy

Claire replies A timely email Massimo. We always endeavour to get artists to provide the best videos for you all. Genzoman recorded his video in this way – he removed his windows – and it was too late for us to change it. As for audio, it is something we always ask the artists to do, but sometimes language or shyness (yes, really!) get in the way. Also, for quite a while now, we've been frustrated by the size constraints of the disc. In order to squeeze everything onto it we've had to significantly lower the resolution of video, and sometimes even omit resources from the disc due to lack of space. From this issue, we've decided to supply the resources in another way so this no longer happens. See page 6 for more info, and let me know what you think.



See page 98 for details on how to get hold of a copy.

While Marta Dahlig's workshop video for issue 100 took us through her painting process, reader Massimo was disappointed that the screen resolution was so low.



Genzoman homage

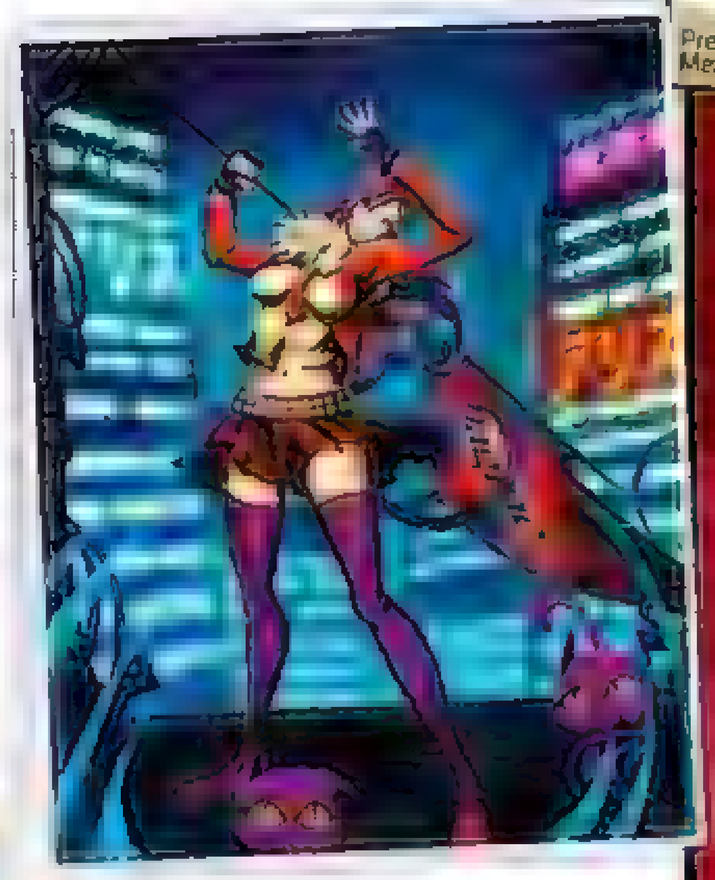
I would like to say that I love your magazine and hope to continue to make progress every day. I would like to send you a piece of fanart of one of your covers (issue 71), the one made by Genzoman.
Jimmy Araya Cortes (Sayn-D), via email

Claire replies Jimmy, I love it – especially the ImagineFX flag! You've captured Genzoman's style perfectly.

Past issues?

I have been a part-time doodler and sketcher since I was a very young boy. I took art in high school and was a trading card/comic book geek that loved reading sci-fi fantasy novels. Now in my early 30s, I find that passion for fantasy worlds and characters hasn't gone away. I now want to bring these characters in my head to life. I recently discovered your magazine, and loved the content of your 100th issue. I also noticed how much I have missed in your previous issues. I was wondering if there was any way to get older copies, as well as any advice you may have on honing my drawing skills and mastering fantasy art. I feel overwhelmed as to where I should begin.
Clayde, via email

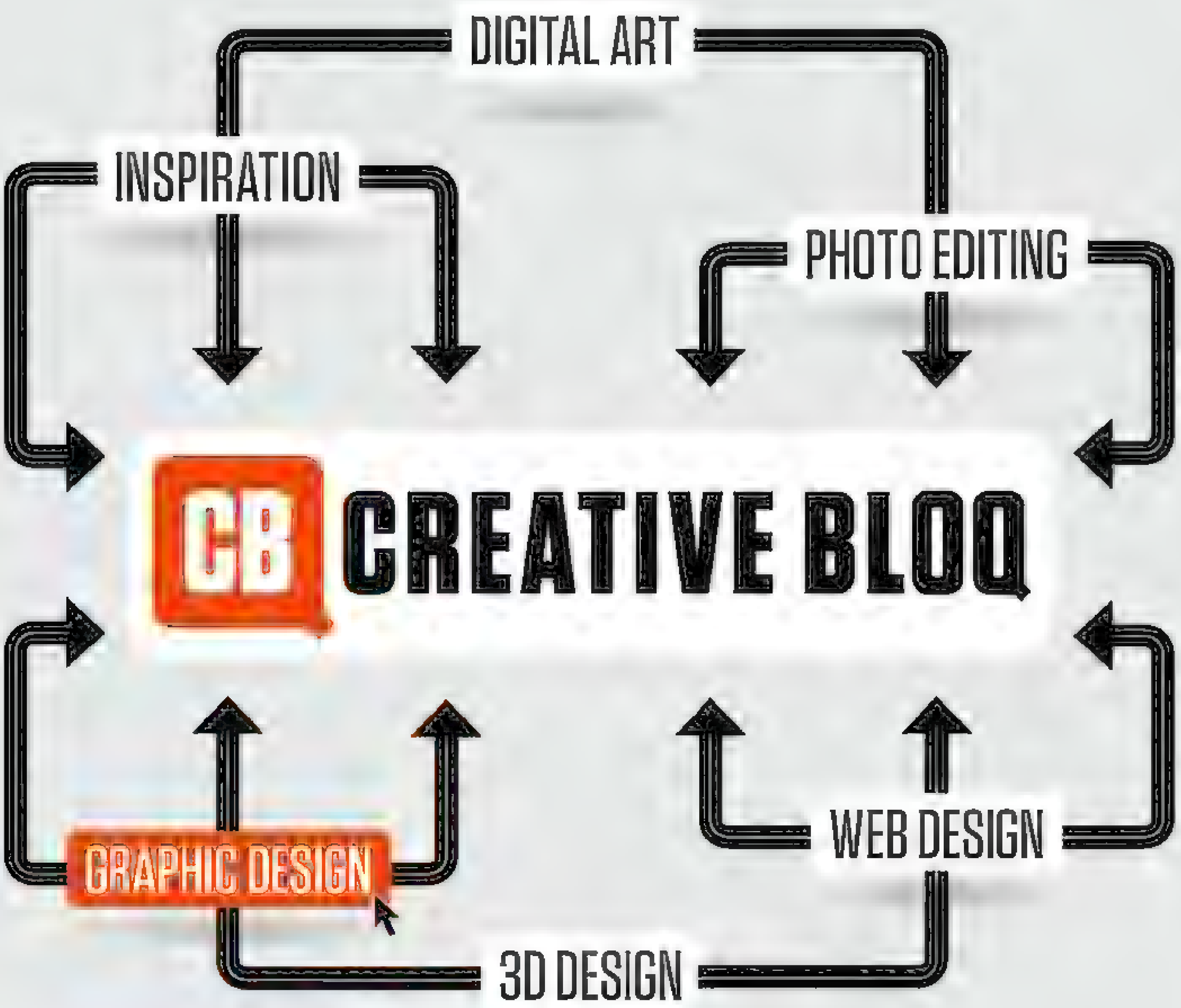
Claire replies Hello Clayde, thanks for your email. The only advice I can give you in such a short space is to draw every day and draw what you love to draw, not what you think you should draw. As for past issues, well, they are a little hard to come by. Usually only the last six issues are available in our shop, as well as a few special collected editions of themed workshops. You can find them at **http://beta.imaginefx.com/shop**.



Reader Jimmy Araya Cortés shows us his own take on Genzoman's manga style cover. Keep sending your art in!



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Artist Q&A

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The ImagineFX panel

Sean Andrew Murray



A freelance illustrator and concept artist, Sean is also the creator of Gateway: The Book of Wizards, and has worked for WotC, EA and Timbiri.

www.seanandrewmurray.com

Sang Han



Sang is a concept artist working at Firaxis Games. He likes to take on freelance projects to keep his skills sharp and broaden his horizons.

www.sanghanart.com

Jake Murray



Jake works in the publishing world as a jobbing freelance, creating art for sci-fi and fantasy book covers, table-top games and advertising.

www.murr-art.com

Don Seegmiller



Artist, author and instructor, Don teaches in the Art and Visual Communication Department at Utah Valley University in Orem, Utah.

www.seegmillerart.com

Tony Foti



Tony is a US freelance illustrator who contributes to D&D and Fantasy Flight Games, Star Wars and The Lord of the Rings lines.

www.tonyfotiart.com

Bill Corbett



Bill works as a freelance artist producing illustrations for media groups, public relations companies, small businesses, bands and private clients.

www.billcorbett.co.uk

Francesco Lorenzetti



Francesco is a concept artist at Atomhawk Design. He enjoys working in traditional media and often goes to life-drawing sessions.

www.bit.ly/ifx-francesco



Question

Can you help me draw someone mid-punch in a fight scene?

Mick Susman, US

Answer

Jake replies



Face-shattering punches are extremely fun to paint. While there are a number of tricks and techniques you can use to add action and impact to your punch pictures, the most important thing to consider will be how your figures are posed.

You really need to think in terms of the animation of the punch. Since a painting can only represent one specific point in time, we need to determine which point in the punching animation is the most visually action-packed. It's actually not when the fist makes contact.

Actually, the best poses for a punching character (and the character on the receiving end) are either the wind-up or the follow-through of the punch. The viewer's imagination will be able to make up the rest of the motion, and the image will be much more interesting because it's mentally engaging. Furthermore, consider the direction of the punch and pose your reacting character accordingly (so if a punching character is throwing left, the character being hit should also be moving left due to the force of the hit).

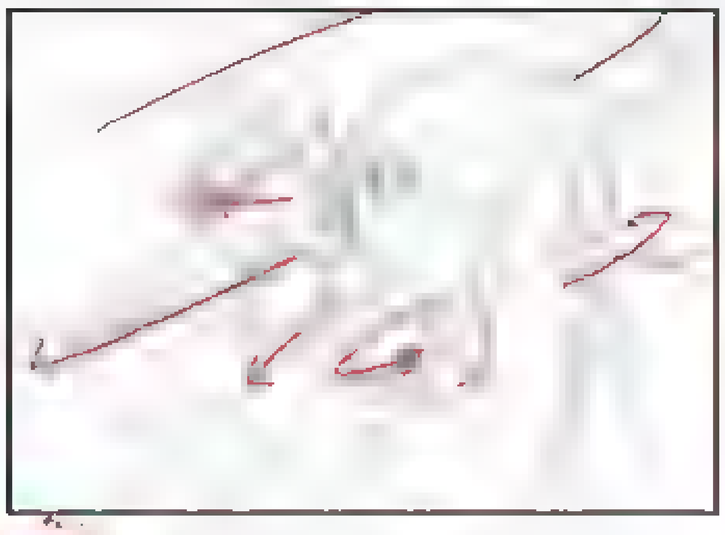


Notice how the mid-point in the punching animation is the weakest pose because it gives us no sense of the overall direction of the punch.

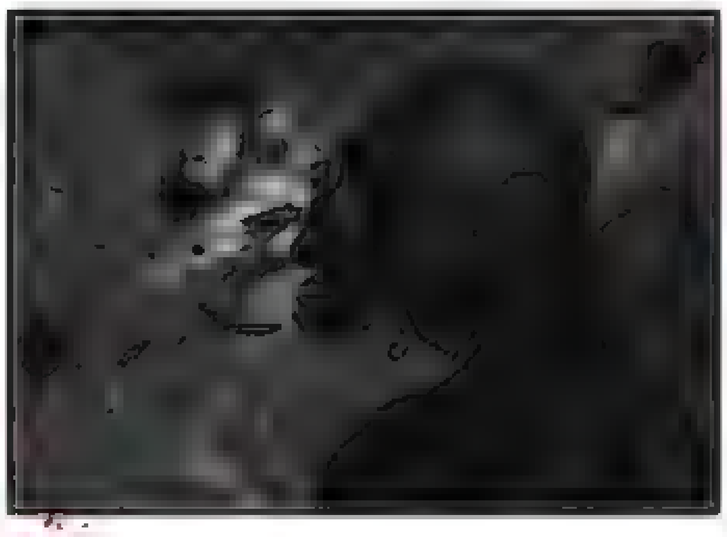
Once you've got your poses down, you can use effects such as flying debris and Photoshop's Motion Blur filter to add a sense of impact and motion to the image. Consider how dangling objects like hair or clothes (or, in this image, cables) would react to the motion of the punched person's head and body. All of these elements working together will help make your punches look as devastating as possible!

Storemags.com

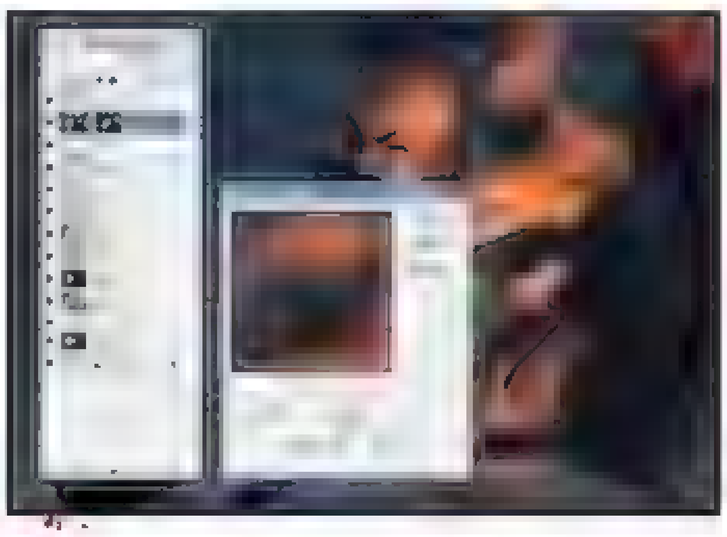
Step-by-step:
Learn to portray a devastating punch



1 I begin by thinking about directional lines of action and eye movement. The first thing I do is lightly draw the arc of the punch (highlighted here in red). I emphasise this action line by keeping the majority of the composition locked within it. By limiting the viewer's eye movement to this line, I can create a sense of speed.



2 Next I work out the tonal plan of the painting. I want to emphasise the punch, so I decide to use a light and dark against grey tonal arrangement to hold our gaze within the action line. It also implies some sort of explosion at the impact point. I keep my strokes loose and directional to indicate blurring and movement.



3 Once I've finished detailing the figures I add some effects to push this punch over the top! Photoshop's Motion Blur filter can do wonders, but it's important not to blur everything. Think about where you want your viewer to focus and avoid blurring those areas. Here, most of the blur is used on the background elements.

Question
Have you got any advice on suggesting depth of field using colour and light?
Dig-Tig, England



Answer
Don replies



Depth of field is the distance between the nearest and most distant objects that appear in focus. The principles behind indicating vast depth using light and colour are straightforward (and are usually referred to as aerial perspective). The key here is to be aware of them and consciously remember to use them.

Note that colours become lighter and cooler as they are located farther away from the viewer (hence why the blue sky directly above us will look darker and bluer than the atmosphere closer to the horizon). As objects become further away from the viewer, the contrast between the light and shadow sides become narrower. An object's local value within the landscape is related to its position relative to the light source.

The most common light source in a landscape is the sky. So objects perpendicular to the sky are usually lightest, while objects parallel to the light coming from the sky are darker. The ground is usually lighter than the sides of a house or barn, for example.

So my advice is to paint the sky darker at the top of an image and lighter closer to the horizon – the colour will also change depending on the environment. Paint objects in the scene close to the viewer with brighter colours and greater contrast between the lights and shadows. Paint objects as they recede with subdued colours and less contrast between the light and shadows. Paint objects that are perpendicular to the light source lighter than you may think they are. And paint objects that are parallel to the light source darker than you might think.

If you can remember and use those concepts, you will be on your way to painting images with a great sense and illusion of distance and depth.

For more information on this key art topic, see **www.bit.ly/ifx-dseegmillerdepth**.



Artist's secret
THE REAL COLOUR OF CLOUDS

Question
Can you help me get the shiny, glistening effect of scales right?
Vish Singh, India



Due to all the bumps and changing angles, the texture of the scales reflects light a bit erratically. Make sure your highlights aren't too smooth.

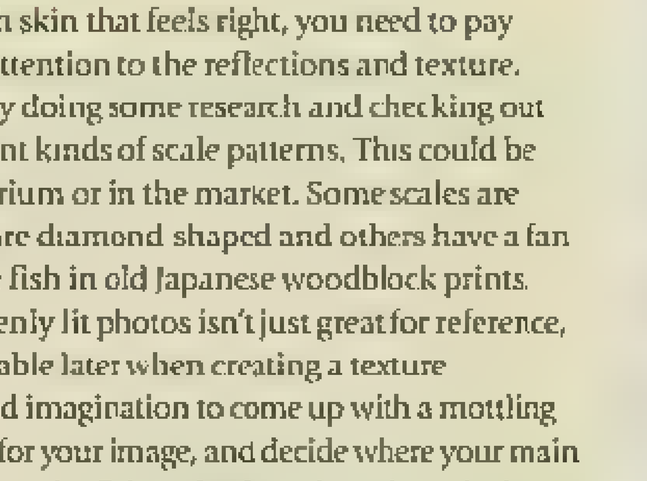
Answer
Tony replies



For fish skin that feels right, you need to pay close attention to the reflections and texture. Start by doing some research and checking out different kinds of scale patterns. This could be online, at an aquarium or in the market. Some scales are hexagonal, some are diamond shaped and others have a fan silhouette, like the fish in old Japanese woodblock prints. Snapping a few evenly lit photos isn't just great for reference, but will also be usable later when creating a texture.

Use reference and imagination to come up with a mottling pattern that works for your image, and decide where your main lighting will be. Drop the fish scale photo into the painting as an Overlay layer so you can start putting down initial textures. Desaturate the layer if you don't want the underlying colours affected.

Bear in mind that highlights are a reflection of the light source(s). Think of a fish tail as if the skin were a curving mirror, then try and find the areas where the sun would be reflected. Highlights are generally found riding the edge of any surface that's curving towards and then away from you.



With any surface that is reflective, the texture is going to show up in the highlights and transitions from light to shadow.

Question
Can you show me how to paint worn metal armour, without it looking soft?
SpiderGirl, Spain



Answer
Sang replies



The answer may lie within the question itself! If you're trying to achieve the opposite of softness, try using brushes with hard edges. But before you actually paint, study real metal armour and you will notice certain characteristics that make it look and feel hard. The two things that come to my mind are sharp specular highlights and sharp abrasive scratches on the surface.

When painting, use the hard-edged brush with short strokes without overly blending or smoothing the values. This will give the effect of metal armour with imperfections, to indicate that it was handmade or perhaps worn out through many battles.

Sometimes it helps me to imagine that I'm working into the actual material. When adding specular highlights or other finishing touches such as nicks and scratches, imagine that you are scratching at the surface of a real piece of metal. I think this approach helps me with the process of describing the various objects and materials that exist in my paintings.

Question
What effect do you get from making faces symmetrical in a portrait painting?
Andrew Taylor, England

Answer
Bill replies



In terms of sci-fi fantasy portraits, symmetry is very important. Heroes and heroines need to be attractive and have heroic proportions to their features. Symmetry plays a large part in dividing the face into the ideal classical proportions that represent beauty as well as indicating other desirable traits.

Symmetry becomes difficult when the head is tilted away from the viewer, but as long as the face is equally divided in the correct proportions the desired effect can still be maintained. This is where the artist's skill with perspective and foreshortening will be tested.

In reality, nobody has a perfectly symmetrical face, but people who are nearest to it, and whose features fit the ideal proportions, tend to be more attractive to us on the whole (although that varies from person to person, of course).

The amount of symmetry that you add to your own painting depends on what you're trying to achieve. Symmetry by itself isn't a guarantee of beauty; what it does guarantee is that the layout of the face has a more credible or natural look to it.

Question
How would you paint burning, smouldering flesh – to depict a supernatural being, say?
Ahmed, India

Answer
Don replies



What could be more appropriate than a devil with burning flesh? In fact, there's no one correct way to paint burning flesh – there are as many ways to accomplish the task as there are art sts

However, all successful paintings of burning materials have one thing in common; the effective use of value. Burning materials and flames are light sources and, as such, must be the lightest elements of any painted image

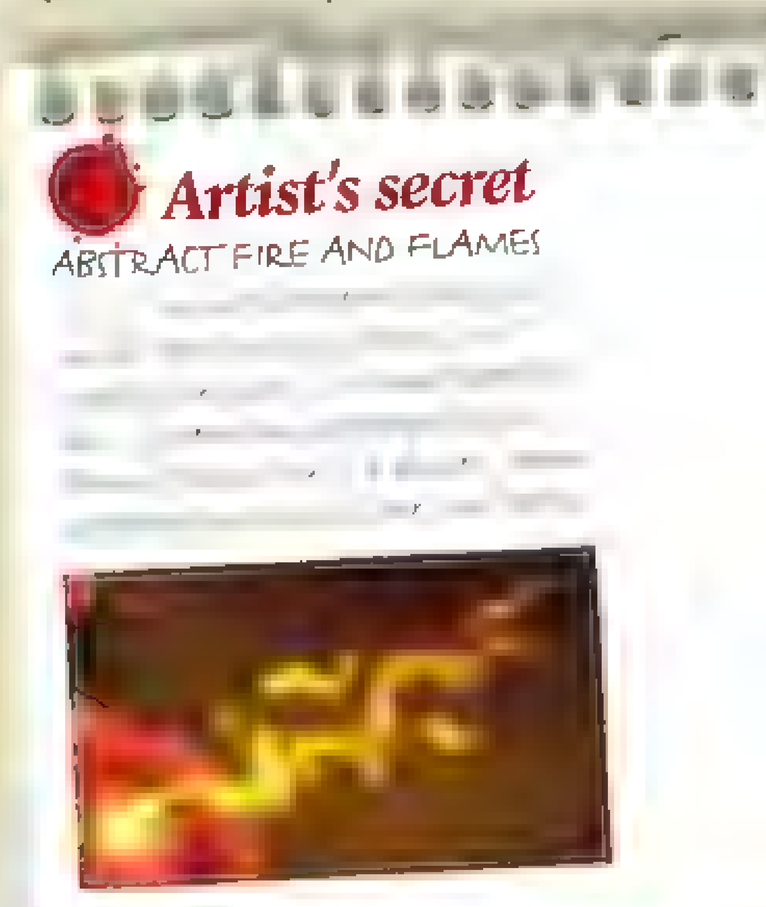
The painting shows one simple method of painting burning flesh.

The software I used for this image is Painter X3 with default brushes, but the method is easily adapted to earlier versions of Painter or the software of your choice. This particular painting is a stylised version of burning flesh and is an easy technique to follow. The basic method could be used for more realistic or imaginative approaches.

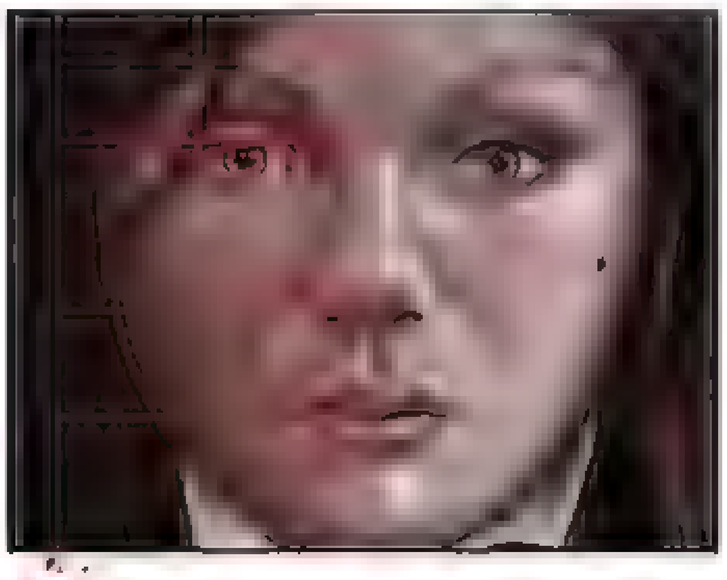
Your starting image must be darker overall than normal. Try to imagine the lightest value in the painting (aside from the fire) as having a mid-value grey. From there, I paint a crackle texture onto the skin surface in a light flame colour, getting gradually darker toward the edges of the burn area. This is the smouldering material at the edges of the flames.

On a new layer I paint the actual flame. This is painted lighter at the point it originates and gradually gets darker further away. On another layer I paint small embers of burning flesh in the air. I finish the image by painting some smoke on an additional layer; once finished, the smoke layer is moved below all the flame layers. As you can see, value is paramount!

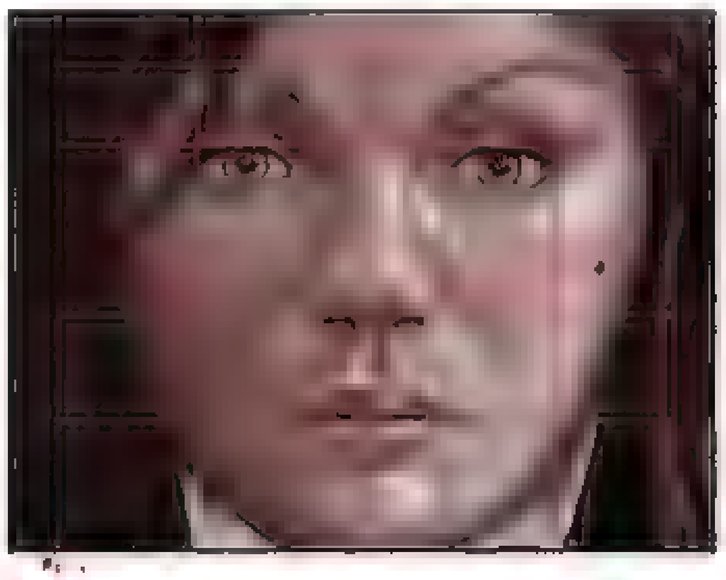




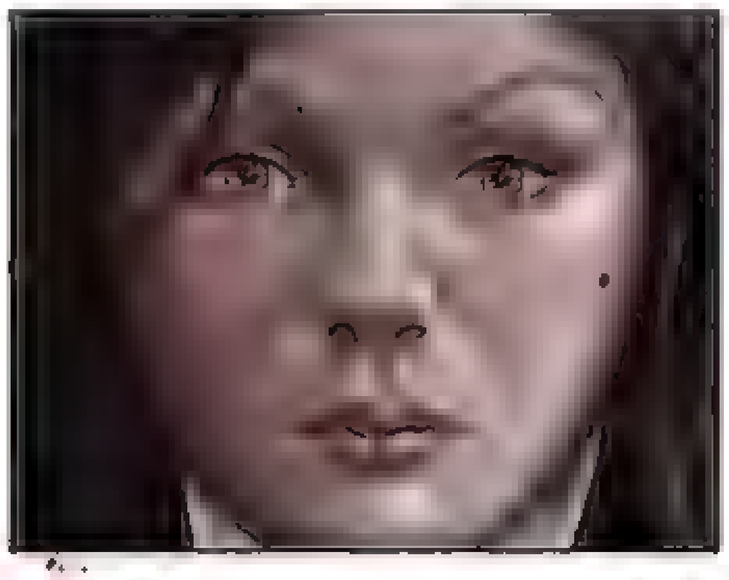
Step-by-step: Controlling symmetry in a portrait



1 When I first made the drawing for this PaintShop Pro painting, I had already planned on making the girl's face full on to the viewer and to be pleasing to the eye. I drew the left side of the face first and aligned the features proportionally to the 'ideal' face, as shown in this first step.



2 After I had mirrored the left half of the face to the right, I made sure all the features aligned symmetrically, to create an overall attractiveness for the fantasy girl character. The overlay illustrates this by showing the proportional divisions and alignments of the face.



3 Of course, not everything should be symmetrical, so small differences between the left and right sides are essential. Also the shading and colouring overall treats the face as a single entity. Only the main features and shape of the face remain aligned on both sides.

Question
How can I achieve a traditionally painted look with digital software?
Doc Hopper, Venezuela

Answer
Sang replies



The best thing to do is to try to think (and work) like a traditional painter. Do some research into some of the master artists who inspire you. Try to understand the reasons why they painted the way they did. Learn some of the processes and techniques traditional painters use and try to translate that into digital medium.

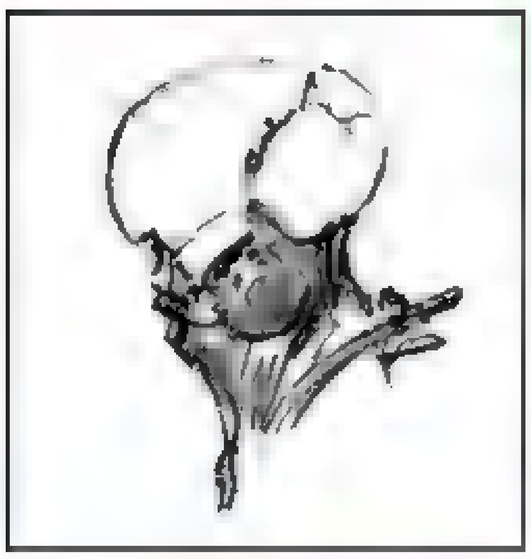
For instance, when I start a painting, I'll do a rough sketch and put a neutral brown colour on top using a Multiply layer. This to me simulates an under-painting of yellow ochre or burnt sienna, which is one of the techniques used by oil painters.

Many people have tried using brushes that simulate analogue bristles, but they may not have thought about how the paint is applied. Traditional painters take great care in applying each stroke of paint, which has been thoughtfully blended to the right colour and value on a palette.

Since the digital medium is so fast and forgiving, we tend to dive right in without much thought and noodle around until something happens. I think this leads to muddy colours, and the energy of the initial gesture gets lost.



Step-by-step: Create a hand-painted look



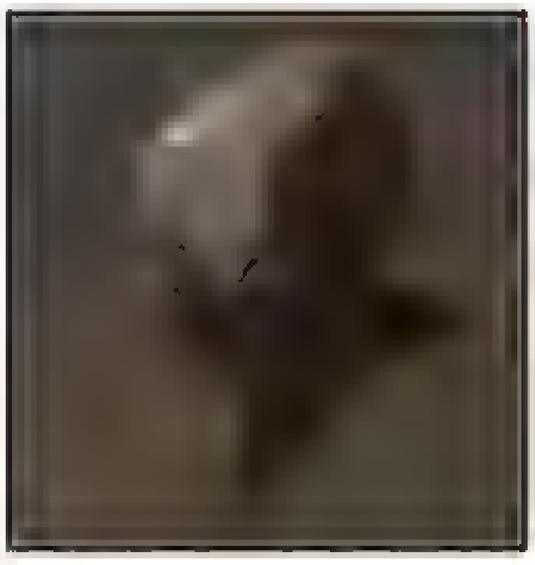
1 I begin with a rough sketch, trying to keep it loose and gestural. It's difficult to think about design, colour, lighting and composition all in one pass so break it down into steps and keep it simple at the beginning. These early steps are important because not only are they the foundation for an entire painting, but some of these strokes may show through in the finished work.



2 Here I create a new layer and change the mode to Multiply, then paint on this layer with a colour that resembles yellow ochre or burnt sienna. This will help to gauge value and colour more easily than if it was a white canvas. I could have simply filled the layer with a flat colour, but again, the painted strokes may show through and add to the final painting.



3 In this step, I block in the local colours and start rendering. As I do this, I try to remember not to overly blend or noodle around too much, as mentioned above. One of my goals is to retain the energy of each brush-stroke and put paint down with a sense of conviction. Sometimes I put a single stroke down, undo it and repeat this process many times until I'm satisfied.



4 Keep in mind that you don't have to render everything. You'll notice in traditional paintings, certain details are kept as abstract marks. This adds another level of interest to the viewer. As you get closer to the end of the painting, lay the strokes down with lower opacity to give the effect of thicker paint. I like to do this when rendering certain accents, such as highlights.

Question
Any tips on designing clothing for a specific character?
Darren Higgins, England



Answer
Sean replies

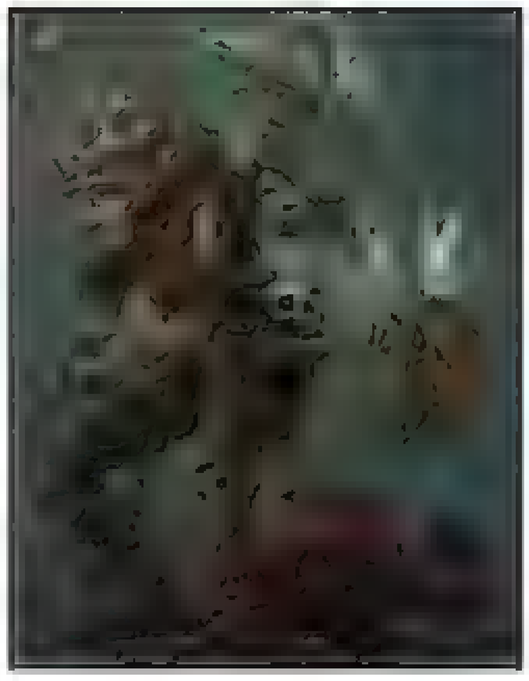


The simple answer is to tell the character's story in his or her clothing. Every day, we wake up and put our clothes on and we tell a little story about ourselves – where we shop, what colours we think look best on us, how we want people to perceive us and suchlike. Character design is all about telling a story, too, and clothing is an excellent medium for doing just that.

Take for instance the image above. We see two characters in this scene who appear to be part of some sort of bird-worshipping cult. They are wearing clothing that has bird-like qualities. headdresses mimic bird plumage, small masks provide them with beaks, thick layering indicates layers of feathers, and the colours are vibrant and expressive like birds.

In the second image we see a shaman-like character who incorporates bones into his clothing. Why? Perhaps he draws his powers from the bones, or perhaps the bones are from spirit animals? The bones are clearly functional, serving as protective armour, so perhaps he is a warrior-priest.

Most of all, have fun with your clothing design and don't feel restricted to standard tropes.



This character's bone-laden ensemble is a mixture of the practical and the aesthetic

Question
How do you draw a person half-submerged in water?
Tony Winterburn, England

Answer
Bill replies

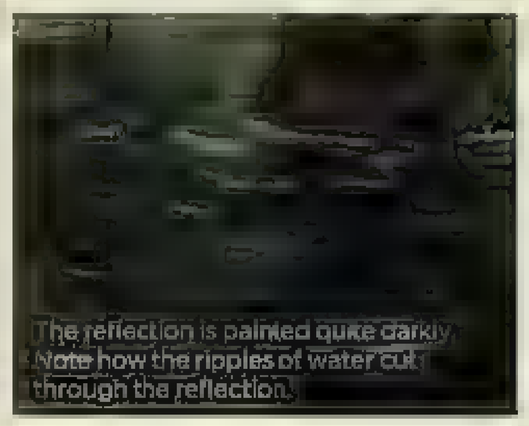


Imagine a person in a bath. When they first enter the bath the water is more opaque and the parts of the body that are submerged are easier to see, although the light will refract them. In this case the whole body must be considered when painting, but those parts that are submerged will be distorted. The reflection of the body upon the water will be minimal and not highly visible.

Once the bath has been polluted and the water is a little dirtier, the submerged half of the body is less visible, but the reflection of the person in the bath is clearer to see in the water. In this case it's not necessary to draw the whole body in the water, but it's important to be aware of where these parts are. This line of thinking should be applied to all bodies of (and in!) water.



This sketch of a submerged merman only required the top half of the body to be painted in the murky water.

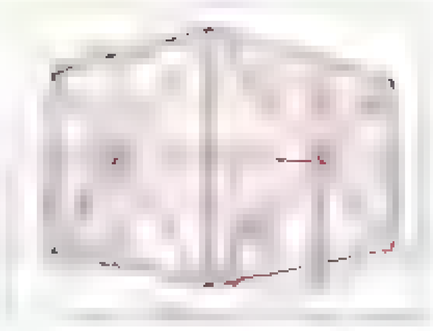


Question
Can you help me portray architecture?
Issuldra Rayeartli, US





Even with a really simple building, it's the details and how they relate to human size that helps to sell the image.



You can easily measure the halfway point of any rectangle in perspective by drawing diagonals from each of its corners and marking where they intersect.

Answer
Jake replies



Drawing or painting architecture can definitely seem daunting! Since the process tends to be heavily reliant on proper perspective drawing, my first suggestion would be to practise as much of that as possible – not just drawing to vanishing points, but also learning to measure and divide spaces in perspective.

Another thing I always try to keep in mind is how to show the size ratio between a building and the people who inhabit it. The easiest option is just to draw some people around your architecture; but you can also show this by being consistent with the size of the details on your building (such as windows and doors), or placing objects like trees or vehicles nearby.

Question
How can I white out a portrait, so it looks like the face is caught by a strong flash?
Verity Perez, Spain

Answer
Tony replies



Shadows are usually a big part of what artists use to convey a sense of depth. Whenever a flash is activated head-on (such as an in-built camera flash), it gets rid of almost every one of those form-defining shapes. Since we won't be able to use many cast shadows, the majority of what you're painting is going to be occlusion shadows and facial landmarks.

Occlusion shadows are the dark areas where two forms come into contact with each other. The most obvious occlusion shadow on the face shows up as a closed mouth, which is a good first landmark to work on. When I say landmarks, I'm referring to the eyes, nostrils, mouth, hairline, jaw and sometimes the ears. Because the eyes and their lashes reflect differently than the skin, they'll still be quite visible.

The light doesn't go up into the nostrils, so they'll show up as well. Pay special attention to each area as best you can, because a high-key painting like this doesn't leave a whole lot to actually draw. Not only that, but having less to draw can make getting the proportions right even more difficult because you have fewer features to measure against each other.



I'm going very high-key with the whole piece to emphasise the white, but you could go with any sort of background you like as long as the light on it matches the light on the face.

How overexposed the image appears is entirely dependent on how much detail you put in.

Question
How can I paint a complex metal structure?
Andrew Bately, US

Answer
Francesco replies



Here you can see a concept I did few years ago that can be used to answer your question. Usually when I paint big structures I tend to use simple shapes that can be read very easily. I then start to render and add detail to make the shapes look more complex. I also add elements such as pipes, panels or any sort of prop to these structures, which makes the surface more visually interesting.

To give a sense of a 3D structure, I overlap the elements to try and create a deep and interesting composition. Scale is also a nice thing to play with: put something easily recognisable that gives the viewer a sense of scale in the image.

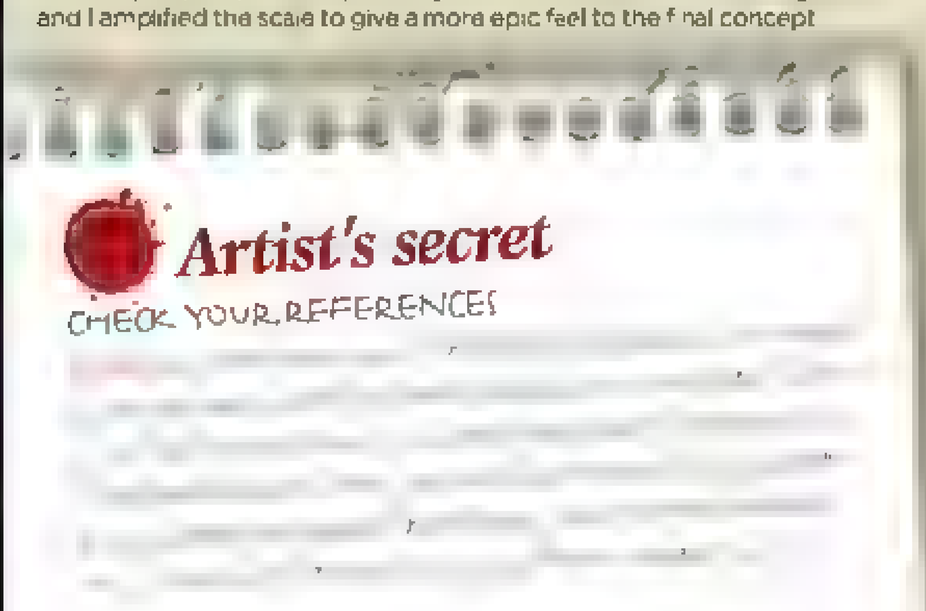
In this case I put a large mech and t ny human figures working around it to show that the scale of this structure is massive. Try to find interesting contrasts between all those ideas and you can see that you don't need to be an architect to create an idea of crazy structures. Of course, to apply all these tips you need to know the basics of perspective and lighting to begin with, but that should be a given for any subject.

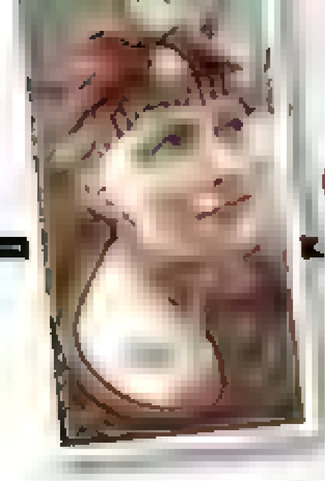


Here you can see a huge industrial sci-fi hangar developed for an old personal project.



This is the first thumbnail I did - you can see I was exploring the mood and the composition. I ended up adding more structures in the middle ground and I amplified the scale to give a more epic feel to the final concept.





Next month

ON SALE: **8 November**

Learn how to paint a surrealist image

Question

Any help with keeping the "look" of a character from different angles?

Vilma P, Finland

Answer

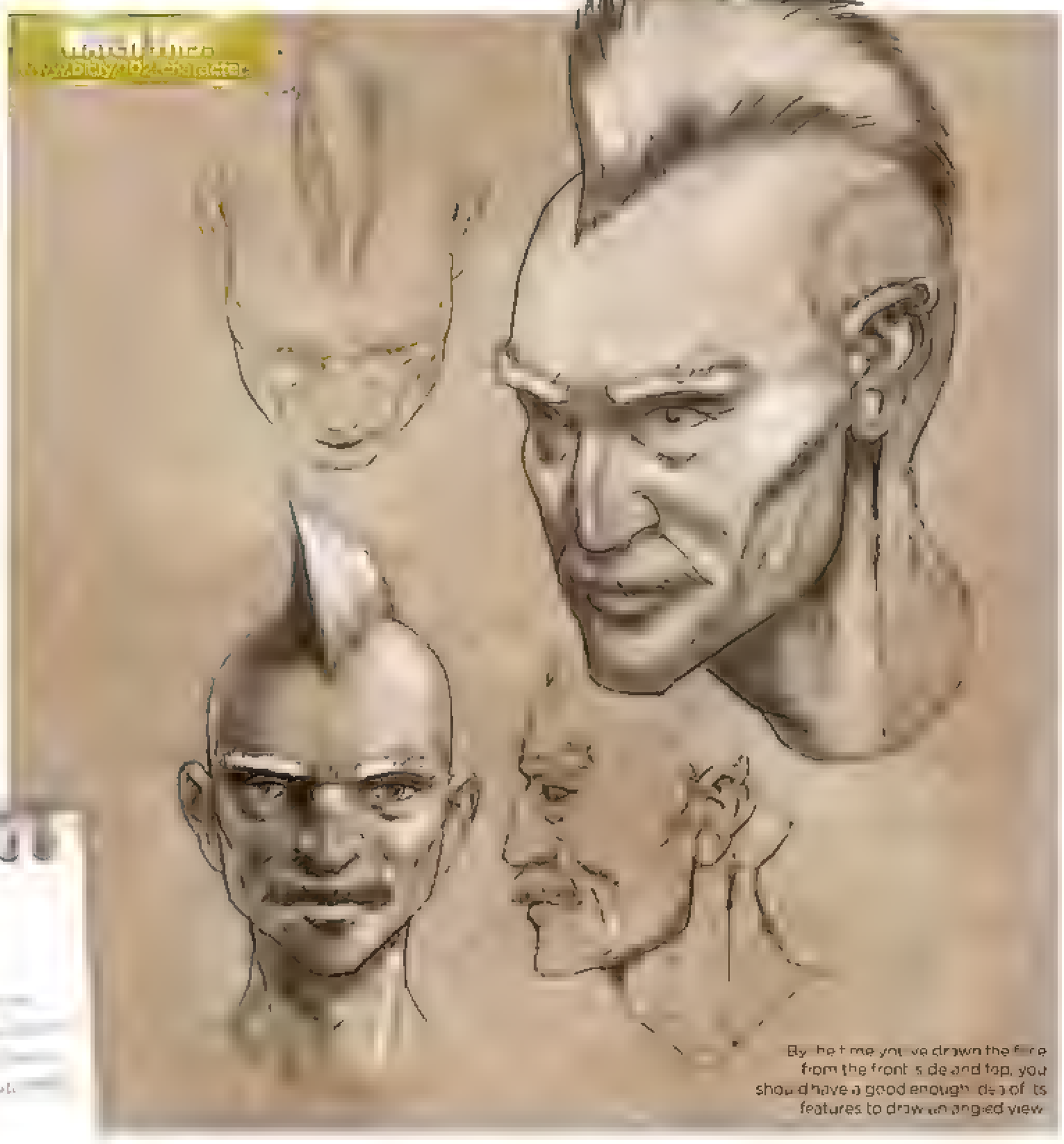
Sean replies



This is certainly a tricky skill to master, but it gets easier with time and practice. The key is to understand the proportions and how the volume and placement of a feature is depicted from various angles. A sharp, chiselled nose is certainly easier to depict in a side view. But knowing how to depict that same nose with the same proportions in the front view is the key to getting this right.

The easiest way to start practising is to use guidelines and draw your character orthographically (front, side, top). This will ensure that at least your features are correctly proportioned. Once you have done this a few times, you can start experimenting with more dramatic angles. Use line width, shading and shadows to explore the volume of features at the less-intuitive angles.

Another vitally important way to practise is to draw real people from life, at various angles. The more you do this, the more you will understand how facial features work.



By the time you've drawn the face from the front, side and top, you should have a good enough idea of its features to draw an angled view.



Artist's secret

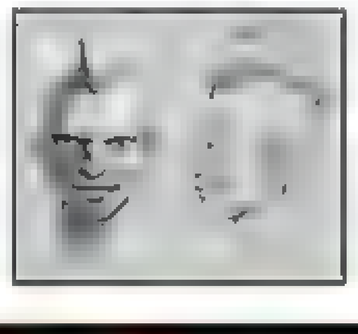
ADJUSTING YOUR TEXTURES

Step-by-step: Using the orthographic view technique

1 Draw your character from the front or side to start, but try both for various characters. Think about what makes your character's face unique – deep-set eye sockets? Weak or strong chin? Sharp, bony cheeks, or soft round ones? Use shadows and shading to indicate volume and depth, for example on a nose that is pointy and juts out more than usual.



2 On a separate layer, draw light guidelines across the page to the right or the left in order to draw the side view. Draw the guidelines from key points in his/her features – the tip of the nose, the bottom of the chin, the middle of the eye, or even things like where the bump in his nose is, or where his cheekbones protrude the most. Too many of these can get confusing.



3 Once you have your side view, move it up the canvas and rotate it about 45 degrees to use it to draw an angled top view. You can draw guidelines from the side view and the front view to help inform this. Then try drawing the face without guidelines from a less straight-on view, using what you've learnt so far.



Got a digital art problem? Is an image giving you artache? Our panel can help. Email your question to our experts at **help@imaginefx.com** or write to **Artist Q&A, ImagineFX, 30 Monmouth St, Bath, BA1 2BW, UK.**

THE ART OF KEITH THOMPSON

Concept artist and visionary, Keith Thompson's journey to create strange new worlds is a lifetime in the works

For years, concept artist and illustrator Keith Thompson has been busy exploring the dark recesses of his imagination. A radioactive mutant creature formed from cadavers, a woman who gives birth to lost, deceased souls – these are just some of more eerie concepts to have come from the Canadian artist's fevered mind

His is a "passion to share visions and worlds with other people," says Keith, when pressed on how he approaches his art. Every sketch and concept comes with a description, a back-story narrated by the artist to put flesh on the bones of his cannibalised Nazis, steampunk war machines and ghostly astronauts.

ONE VISION

"I let the art guide me, firstly through imaginative visions," says Keith as he explains how his rich stories come about. "As the mental image coalesces, a narrative will begin to build around it and feed back into the image. The narrative is important to give hints and indications of a context that stretches out far past the image's immediate denotation."

Such rich results don't come easily, or quickly. Keith's process is one of long pauses, thoughtful spaces in which, to the observer, nothing is happening, but internally Keith is deep in study. Plans are taking shape. Shapes are forming. Then, when inspired, he takes to the paper and canvas, sketching "feverishly, in the sense that I'm relatively impatient and work at a frantic pace," confides the artist.

Luckily, Keith's studio is the perfect environment for an artist to take stock in a tidy space, one built for inspiration more than a reclusive hive.

It's evident from his studio that Keith is an avid collector, gathering a huge amount of prints, both contemporary and antique, for inspiration. "I grew up in a world of reproduction and simulacra, and that's given me a bit of a romantic bent," says Keith of his love of gathering artefacts around him. "If everything physical today is a fake – a reproduction of something that may or may not have an original mould – then the only thing left of any substance is the concept and the creator."

> "I grew up in a world of reproduction and simulacra, and that's given me a bit of a romantic bent"

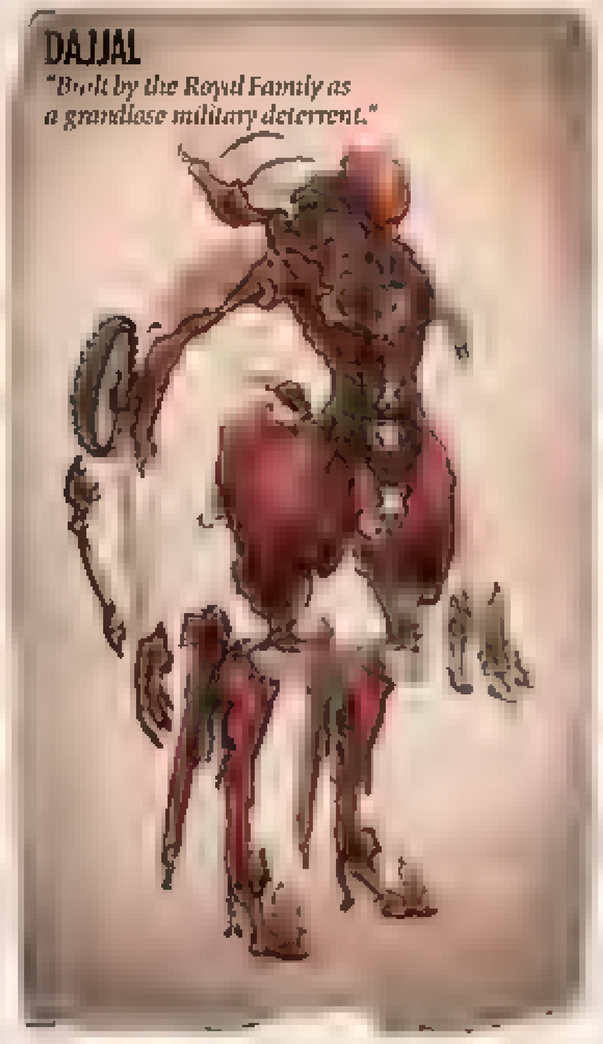
All the digital equipment stands on a pillar desk, while Keith's traditional work is done while standing at an imposing old drawing table (acquired from a retired architect, reveals Keith proudly).

Around the room, art covers every wall. The mix, in keeping with Keith's art, is varied and textured. Black and white etchings are pinned alongside paintings and a reproduction tapestry hangs here, too. It's

The artist keeps it all a little obsessively tidy, to avoid having clutter catching his eye as he works. He reveals how any disorder is reserved for his library, where books are towered in groups as he researches a new project. "Those stacks ➤➤



PRINCE WITH THE TURQUOISE HEAD
In this personal piece, the prince is far from benign, as the melting bodies of his worshippers attest





POLYP CAVALRY STEED
"The original subject infected by the Polyp School can be seen hanging in the core of the steed."

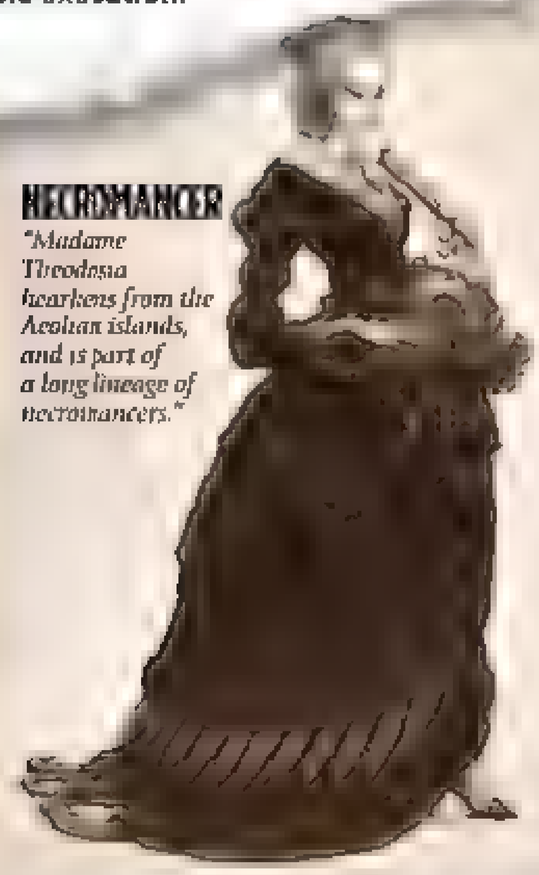
VIRAEMIA

More sickness and disease as squads of "scorched earth" units attack the city, disguised as plague doctors...

ARTIST TIP

DON'T HOLD BACK

"An enthusiastic piece that overextends will always be more interesting than a piece of art that holds back for the sake of reliable execution."



NECROMANCER

"Madame Theodosia hearkens from the Aeolian islands, and is part of a long lineage of necromancers."



can grow and erode like natural formations if their corresponding project lasts a while," says Keith.

ART ON FILM

When he's not buried in books searching for research to inspire the art for the latest project or Leviathan book – Keith is the chosen artist to represent the alt-history world of New York Times best-selling author Scott Westerfeld – you can find the artist on film sets around the world. Even here, away from clutter of his library and studio, the artist is constantly on the lookout, hoping to find inspiration in the detritus of foreign lands.

"We're all rabid art collectors, so there's constant collective excursions to the best unique book stores in the city we're in," explains Keith when discussing the experience of working on film sets. "I've literally destroyed luggage trying to bring

> "Everything has to be seen through the lens of humanity to have any meaning"

back all the books and art I collect when I return from making a movie."

Film work, such as on Guillermo del Toro's ill-fated adaption of HP Lovecraft's At The Mountains of Madness and more recent summer-smash Pacific Rim, has its own rewards and constraints. Keith appreciates meeting up with old friends and working with new art legends. Del Toro, says Keith, assembles teams that are "intimidating and talented" but the "greatest people". All that remains in these instances, assures the artist, "is a mind completely free to think of nothing but the work."

ALIEN ART

Whether crowded by books or fellow artists, Keith has created some astounding creature designs for books and films. Always drawn to working on alien designs, the artist tackles what he calls the 'conceptual trap' of alien design head on. "Probably the most genius alien designs don't come across with much impact through art," confides Keith, "I believe

ROMULUS

"Bearing the symbol of the fasces, the Romulus was introduced as an AI-controlled hetar."





S19 SYRINGE SAINT

"This aid robot is fitted with five articulated air jets that keep it afloat as it steps nimbly across hazardous ruins."

everything has to be seen through the lens of humanity to have any meaning, so I try to explore the most distant and unnerving forms, and then inject a tiny shred of something intensely evocative to a human."

This approach can be seen in all of Keith's work. Creatures are made from wrinkled folds of flesh, teeth protrude from ribcages, multiple spindly limbs breach the skin and metal mixes with bone to form extravagant unworldly creatures. There are elements of Hieronymus Bosch in Keith's grotesque but charismatic creations, which take us into "uncharted territory with a landmark that shows how far away the

APOLLONIAN WIGHT

Keith explains why an image is never just an image – and why they may spark even more stories and pictures

KEITH THOMPSON

VITAL STATISTICS

"We're all rabid art collectors..."



Birthday
One of the days but not of March

Location
When I'm not working abroad, my home base is Ottawa, Canada

Website
www.bit.ly/ifx-kthompson

Time spent creating an average painting
Between one week and one month.

Top five favourite contemporary artists:
Odd Nerdrum, Uno Moralez, Katsuya Terada, Vania Zouravliov, Aaron Beck

Most influential creature design
Toss up between Giger's Alien and Froud's Skeksis

Why you got into art
I always felt it was inevitable

Why you'd never get out of art
My body won't let me.

Your reaction to being the second favourite artist of ImagineFX readers
Very flattered and encouraged to keep making what I hope is rich and enjoyable art

Where you see your influence in other art
I'm not sure yet. I think I need to achieve a bit more with my own work before I expect to see any ripples it may make in the pond

THE CHALLENGE OF DIGITAL ART

Keith believes artists need to take full account of the digital medium if their work is to be comparable to paintings created traditionally



THE COLLECT
"The Collect is composed of souls captured at death and contained under high pressure with liquid aghaophoris."

CAPRICORN
A representation of the traditional deity, comprising both goat and fish elements.

DROP FRAME
This image is a combination of two of Keith's favourite subjects: ghosts and robots

APOLLONIAN DROP FRAME

The artist revisits a chilling thematic world that he built around an earlier image concept



PIRATE TANK
One of Keith's many vehicle designs for the Iron Grip MMO strategy game series from developers Isocx, all of which feature a strong steampunk feel

whole thing is from what we're comfortable with."

LIFE IN ART

While film work has taken up much of Keith's time, it can be a frustrating process. Concept art is part of a greater whole, filtered and condensed in the movie-making process. The process of conceptualising art for films is a challenging role. "It's tough to leave behind some of the most promising iterations along the path," reflects the artist. "We had our own approaches on At The Mountains of Madness that resulted in some pretty incredible sights."

Professional art in general offers constrictions, when creating art for a third-party there will always be buffers to push against. "But constriction can impart some very good things into art as well," says Keith. "Something to push back against is a good natural situation to be in, it frames your own goal by forcing it to be levelled against something contextual."

Away from his commercial work Keith is busy building up a portfolio of personal art. Each of his intricately designed aliens, characters and machines comes with a written passage, a snapshot of contextual information that places his art into a wider universe, which demands to be explored.

> **We had our own approaches on At The Mountains of Madness that resulted in some pretty incredible sights**

This ties into the artist's singular creative goal, "to progressively build a continuing sense of a world through my work". There's no grand plan, however – Keith is willing to live on impulse, picking and choosing projects that suit the art he wishes to make. In this sense, he views the ultimate goal of building strange, unexplored worlds in his art as a lifetime's achievement. "Making a window into another world is something I won't ever be able to complete as a goal in a linear sense, but I plan to spend my whole life striving to give people peeks into something evocative and unique."



SURFACE KING
"Two divers working at the absolute limit of safe diving depth happened upon a building of sorts..."

MANUALLY ASSISTED SEA CYBORG
A heavily genetically modified Beluga whale with mechanical grafting, for clearing mines.



SAINT OF PARASITES
"A vain figure would enter, flanked by two monastic attendants, each holding up the lengths of her vestments."

ARTIST TIP

EXTEND YOUR GAZE

"Everything can be interesting to the artist. Notice any detail you may need to include in the artwork. Even if it's a mundane necessity to the larger subject, try to be enthralled by little things, like how something may be tied or the manner in which something may rest on the floor."

FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX

Sketchbook

charles santoso

Charles's sketchbook is a springboard for drawing all things real and fantastic. He won't leave home without it!

PROFILE

Charles Santoso
COUNTRY: Australia



Charles is a concept artist and illustrator based in Sydney. He loves drawing very little things in a very little journal and dreams about funny, wondrous stories. He's employed at an animation studio as a concept artist/art director, working on various feature film and TV projects. He also tackles several picture book projects in his spare time.
www.charlessantoso.com

CHARACTERS

"I sketch to explore and understand stories, characters or ideas. Getting used to the act of drawing is vital for me to dive into what's important. It's a more efficient approach





ANIMALS

"Drawing animals is fun. You can sometimes find yours and others' emotions reflected through them."



BIG MOUTH SYMPHONY

"Pencil gives me textures that I still can't mimic in Photoshop. I love the raw quality of the medium and the results."

ANDROID

RANDOM WORD DOODLES

"Every now and then, I ask the kind folks of the Twitterverse to send me a word (my Twitter name is @mintreehouse). I pick the very first one that pops up there and spend between 30 and 90 minutes drawing something based on it. This is an exercise that I do to tickle my brain regularly."





SKETCHBOOK

"My sketchbook is filled with different types of drawings ranging from observational sketches and random ideas to occasional finished drawings. I find that a small, pocket-size sketchbook is handy to carry and I always have one with me everywhere I go."

"Pencil gives me textures that I still can't mimic in Photoshop"

Sketchbook

ZOMBIE

"Here's another sketch that came into being thanks to the Twitterverse. Most of these doodles were done digitally in Photoshop. These images are nowhere to be considered final and their quality varies, depending of the complexity of the idea."



"I often sketch one subject over and over until something clicks"



EXPLORATIONS

"Sketching is a big part of my process. I often sketch one subject over and over until something clicks before moving forward to create a finished piece. These explorations are usually really rough and not intended to be shown in public."



LITTLE STORY SEEDS

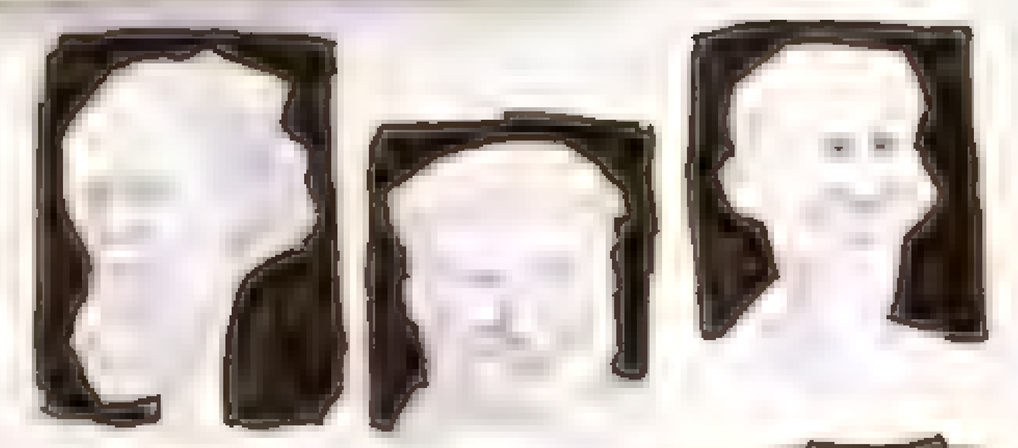
"I collect lots of small stories and ideas within my sketchbook as visual anchors for my future self. It's quite rewarding to find forgotten sparks when I visit my old sketchbooks."

DIFFERENT MEDIUMS

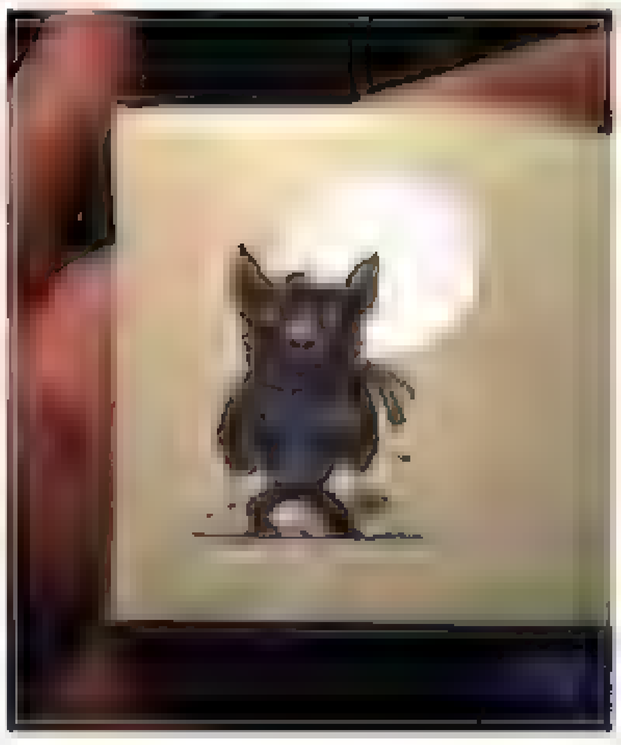
"Jumping between different mediums often give me breakthrough and unexpected results. Markers, watercolours, inks, computer, charcoals, art paper, print paper, notepad, Post-it notes... anything goes!"

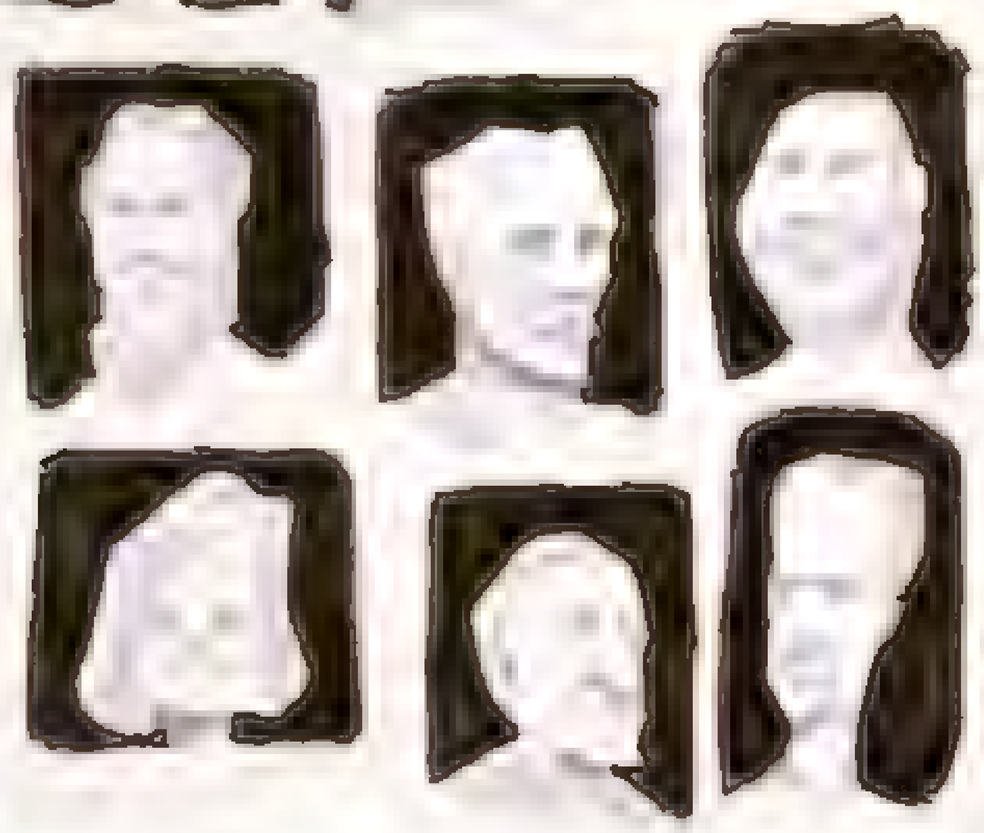
PEN

"My favourite medium to draw on my sketchbook is pen, because it forces me to not worry about making mistakes on the page. It's quite liberating."









Want to share your sketches? Then drop us an email, with a selection of your artwork, to **sketchbook@imaginefx.com**, together with some information about yourself.

ANCIENT GODS *A personal piece created in Photoshop. The influence of classic Robert E. Howard is evident here, with strong echoes of Conan the Barbarian and pulp imagery* Cross

"I've never been too interested in sci-fi, but I feel that is because I've never been too interested in non-organic things"

DAREN BADER

Fantasy artist Daren Bader's inspirations go all the way back to his childhood, and the great outdoors of southern California...

One particular time I recall fondly was swimming in an icy clear river in the mountains facing downwards, hovering over the round rocks as the river drifted me downstream like I was flying. There were trout swimming below me, and I felt like I was in some kind of secret world.

Daren Bader's childhood memories seem dreamlike, the way he describes them – and as he recalls an upbringing spent outdoors camping and hiking in California, it's not difficult to pick out these influences in his work. The paintings he's done – both digitally in Photoshop and oil on canvas – all have a visceral quality to them that comes from nature. With bark and rock textures, leaning shadows and earthy settings, he effortlessly evokes a world where the air is warm and dry on your face, and the dirt feels chalky on your hands.

You'll catch glimpses of this world across Daren's work. He's painted over 150 Magic: The Gathering cards for Wizards of the Coast as well as working on Dungeons & Dragons, and various other fantasy games for Blizzard, Paizo, Games Workshop and more. On top of all these freelance projects, he works as an art director in the computer games industry, overseeing the look and feel of various releases for Rockstar Games in San Diego. His work has featured in Spectrum too, and he's published two of his own books: Daren Bader, and One Hundred Drawings.

One of his latest pieces is a cover for an official Edgar Rice Burroughs comic that's being released via Dark Horse. Once again, nature plays a huge role in the piece, but you can't overlook the way Daren captures both heroes and monsters in his work: muscles straining, faces taut with the expression of combat, and a touch of mythology about them.

"Dinosaurs, monsters, animals, mythology, Edgar Rice Burroughs and Robert E Howard comic book covers, Star Wars – all the things that were interesting to me would influence my graphic sensibilities," says Daren. "I've never been too interested in sci-fi, as opposed to fantasy, but I feel that is because I've never been too interested in man-made things. I can certainly appreciate them, but they don't feel like they are a part of me the way a rock formation does."

CHARGING RHINO

Magic: The Gathering has formed a huge part of Daren's portfolio over the years, and even though it's been going for years, for him the format is as alive as ever. His first MTG painting was the Charging Rhino image, back in 1997, for the Tempest set. The cards became an ongoing freelance gig and he's been involved with some huge sets since those early days.

PROFILE

Daren Bader



AGE: 46

COUNTRY: US

FAVOURITE ARTISTS: Frank Frazetta, Jeff Jones, Bob Kuhn, Moebius, Gerling

SOFTWARE USED: Photoshop

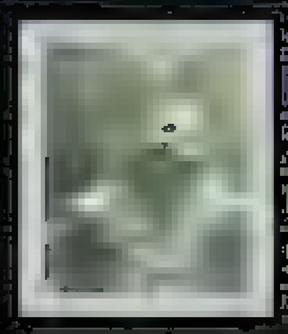
AVERAGE TIME PER IMAGE: From four to 14 hours

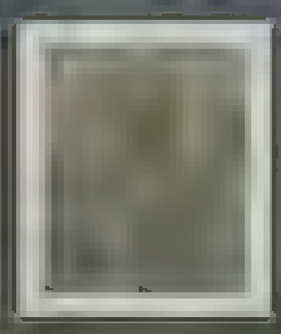
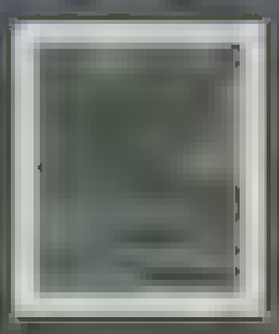
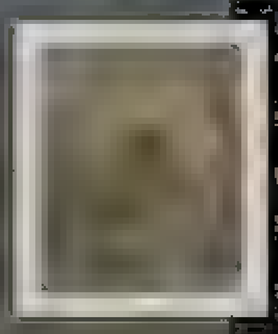
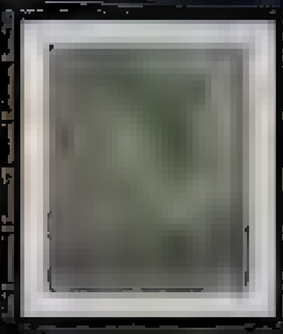
WEB: www.bit.ly/ifx-dbader



SNOW CHASE: This was created using acrylic on canvas. It's one of Daren's personal pieces, and typical of his "great wilderness" style

Gallery






PILLARS OF HERCULES *A digitally produced cover for the semi-historical novel by David Constantine, published by Nightshade Books.* Class



WARHAMMER ONLINE *Cover for the massively multiplayer video game version of Warhammer, published by Games Workshop.* Class



CITIES SKETCH *Working out the composition for this image in detail was key to producing maximum impact* Class

LOST CITIES OF GOLARION

A classic image incorporates many of Daren's favourite elements

One of Daren's most striking commissions was a front cover for the Pathfinder role-playing game series, published by Paizo. The illustration for the Lost Cities of Golarion module features a Middle Eastern heroine quite taking on a giant scorpion in a lost desert city – with a swarm of flesh-eating scarabs attacking them. This piece really hits to the core of many of the childhood memories I have of the great Harryhausen's road movies. It's just begging to be an animated old-school stop-motion," enthuses Daren.

Balancing the composition was a key challenge. It's all the result of trying to fit everything needed into the given space. I was really conscious to focus everything towards the heroine.



Comments



Clifford Hope

"Putting the viewer into the scorpion's hiding place was a shrewd decision by Daren, enabling the use of layers of shade and light to highlight the figure as your eye travels into the image. Great detail on the carved rock, too."



Illustrator

"This painting has a dynamite arrangement. It reads as a thumbnail or a mural, starting with a bold silhouette and layering more information on as you look closer. To deliver such depth and still read at the size of a postage stamp is truly [illegible] mastery."



Schwager

"The colours and textures in Daren's painting work beautifully together and give a real sense of where the scene is set, while the dynamic composition easily guides the viewer's eye towards the awesomeness of the main character. And she is truly awesome!"

Stormags.com

DAREN BADER



REMORSELESS WINTER *Created for the card of the same name in Blizzard's World of Warcraft trading card game* Close



BLOOD BOWL *Another cover illustration painted for Games Workshop's popular board game based around fantasy combat.* Close

The following decade saw Daren lending his skills to the computer games industry as a senior art director. He started at Angel Studio in 1996, doing work for Microsoft, Capcom and Disney. In 2002 it was sold to Rockstar Games. This led to his work on the Red Dead franchise, Bullet proof and Revolver – the prison dioramas set in the 1920s and early 1900s, the days of the Wild West.

"It was quite funny the Western genre allowed us to explore an environment that wasn't common in games at the time: a hot, sunny day in the desert. Instead of making dark, colour-drenched worlds we were making bright, stark, colour-faded worlds where the environment was a major character in the story," Daren says. "As far as what we had in mind when working on the projects, we looked to Sam Peckinpah and Sergio Leone movies, as well as artists like Frederic Remington and Frank Tenney Johnson, to name just a few.

"The setting, with its endless landscape of dirt, dusty trees and rocks, sounds perfect for Daren's own sensibilities. However, he feels freest when he's painting an image with a fantasy element to it, and his aim is usually for the graphic environment to provide a home for the fantasy animals and creatures he delights in. Ray Harryhausen and Frank Frazetta are two of his biggest inspirations.

Daren's approach to these creatures is based on observation first and experimentation second. He says: "Early in his career, he did a lot of sculpting and animation work, which helped him develop his skills as a painter. "Both of these disciplines helped hone my observational skills," he explains. "Working a creature and then breaking it down to animate a walk cycle is very useful information to a representational artist. The experimentation is important when I begin to thumbnail compositions and gestures. I find myself quickly and freely design interesting creative shapes, working out the flow and motion."

By day, Daren continues to art direct for Rockstar Games. He'd also love to get down to work putting together images for another book, but this, he predicts, won't be ready for another couple of years. In the meantime, you can catch him at various art conventions.



PLAGUE OF SHADOWS *More classic fantasy in this cover art for a book from Paizo Publishing, set in the Pathfinder world.* Close

Gallery





Course image from *Taking Your Digital*

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FANTASY SCI-FI DIGITAL ART

ImagineFX Workshops

25 PAGES OF TUITION

Video workshops on your digital edition...
If you see this Watch This button, click the link (or write it down) to view the video that accompanies a workshop

Advice from the world's best artists



This issue:

Mixing traditional and digital media
Jean-Sébastien Rossbach helps you add traditional art skills to your digital work.

Make the digital look traditional
Yuko Rabbit uses colour and contrast to give digital art a more traditional look.

Be clever with your colour
Using a complementary colour scheme, with Christopher Burdett.

Creating new documents
PJ Holden reveals the options for creating a new document in Manga Studio 5.

Getting started with Illustrator
Tom Mac creates a fantasy design in Adobe Illustrator.

Perspective advice using Painter
Depict perspective in your art using Corel's Painter X3. Don Seegmiller explains all.

Create a portrait with a twist
Lauren K Cannon makes unusual colour and compositional choices.

Paint a star princess
Zezhou Chen reveals how he gives his celestial figure some romance and magic.

Traditional skills & Photoshop

MIX TRADITIONAL AND DIGITAL MEDIA

Keen to create unique-looking imagery? Then try mixing traditional art skills with your digital painting process, says **Jean-Sébastien Rossbach**

People say that I have a painterly style. The fact is that when I was an aspiring artist back in the late 90s, I used Photoshop to help me achieve the results I had in mind, and I was frustrated not to produce them using real paint and brushes. I would often begin an illustration on paper, try to push it as far as I could, and when I reached my limit I'd scan in the art and finish it digitally.

Years afterwards, I often do things the other way around: create a sketch in Photoshop before switching to my canvas. My technique may have changed, but I haven't lost the habit of playing with tubes of colour, and I still like to use both digital and traditional tools for the complementary serv ces they provide. After all, sharpening your technique in a sketchbook is definitely not the same as doing it on a Wacom.

Artist PROFILE

Jean-Sébastien Rossbach

COUNTRY: France

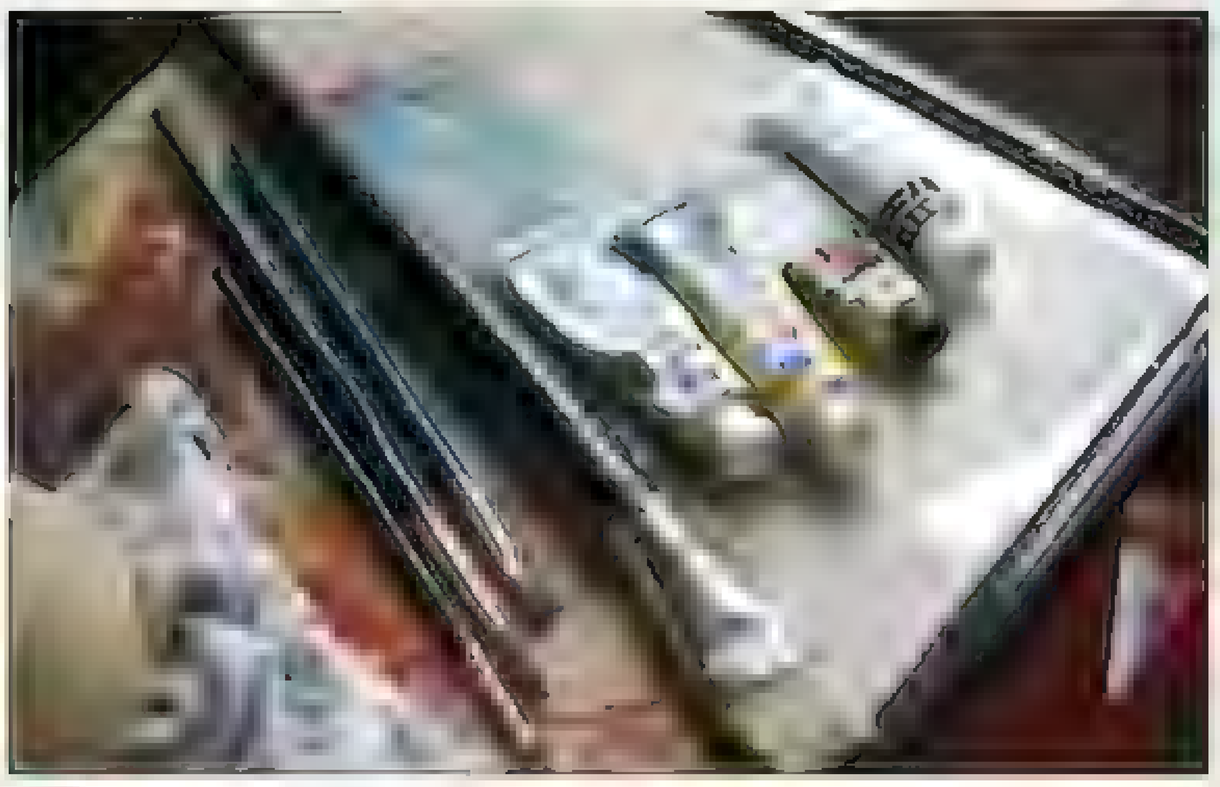


Jean-Sébastien is an award-winning illustrator, concept artist and painter. He has illustrated covers for numerous novels, video games and comics. His clients include Marvel, Ubisoft, Wizard of the Coast, Blizzard and Tor Books.

http://livingrope.free.fr

WORKSHOP FILES

So I've decided to share some simple ideas that will hopefully help you to add new techniques to your painting process. Through a series of simple steps I'll show you how it's possible to generate the painterly look and the natural textures that you've always liked, yet never knew how to incorporate into your art. And who knows – maybe with this workshop you'll create an original painting, ready to be sold! Wouldn't that be cool?



1 Ready your tools

For this workshop you'll need your computer and a tablet; a scanner; vine charcoal, conté crayons or a heavy 7B pencil; a kneadable eraser; a regular eraser; a couple of brushes and a few gouache tubes. The paper can be whatever you have to hand: Bristol, Canson or watercolour paper, for example. You can also choose to paint on top of one of the drawings you like in your sketchbook, but you'll need to tape it on to your table to prevent the page from warping.

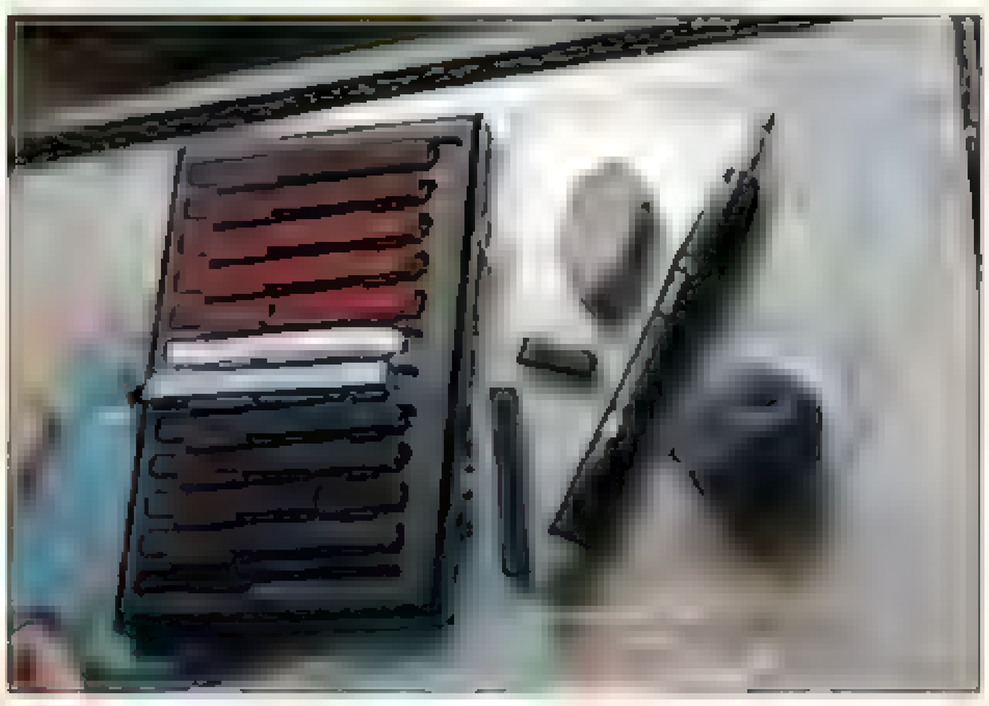
2 Charcoal or pencil?

I use charcoal because it's a versatile tool that produces a variety of effects, from thin lines to bold strokes. However, those just starting out can find it tricky to control, with the results often looking messy. So use a regular pencil if you prefer. Try not to use a mechanical one, though: we want to have fun here, not produce a technical drawing plan!



3 Now create your base image

Feel free to draw straight from your imagination or from a reference. You can use tracing paper if you're not comfortable with free hand, or even use a light table if you have one. There's a common belief that tracing is cheating. This is partly true, but try to consider the painting for what it is: an exercise. You need to focus on the expressiveness of your drawing and the painted textures you want to produce.



4 Strong black values

It's important that you use something with a strong black value, such as a 6B or 7B pencil. The goal is to let the drawing appear behind the paint that will be applied later. If you use a 2H or an HB pencil, there's a good chance the information will be lost. Again, if you feel uncomfortable with diving straight in with a 7B, you can still make a pre-drawing with an 2H to be sure of drawing something accurate. →

Traditional and



Shortcuts
Curves tool
Ctrl+M (PC)
Cmd+M (Mac)
Switch your image to different colours you may not have thought about before

5 Expressive marks

I don't use a mechanical pencil, because in this workshop I'm trying to give as much expressiveness to my first traditional steps, which I'll be counting on to make my painting stand out. I'm not afraid to make mistakes, either, because I know that I'll be able to paint over them and fix it in Photoshop. I just let the charcoal do its job and have fun with the marks that I put on the paper

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSHES: HARD ROUND 31

I use it mainly to draw outlines. It's sharp and precise, with some expressiveness

HARD ROUND 51

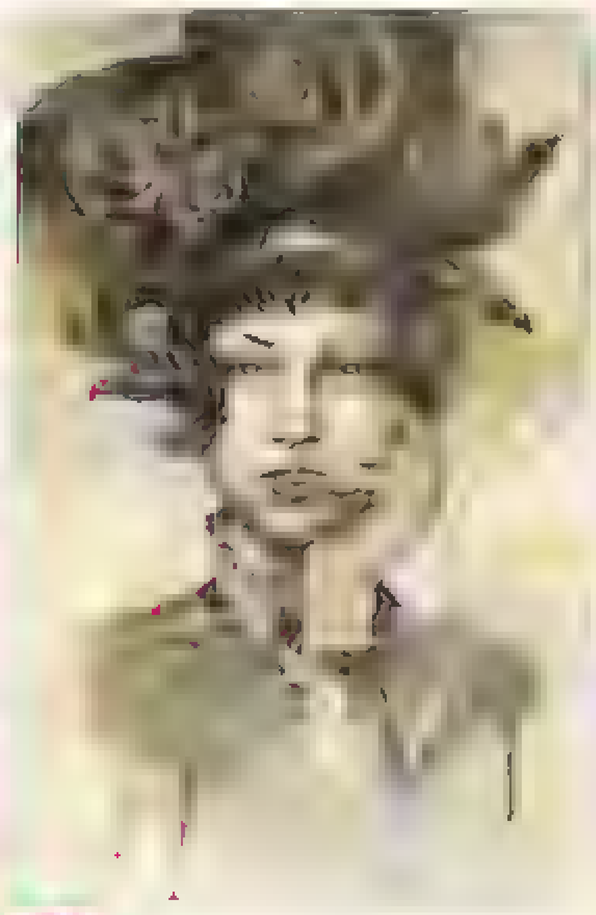
The one I use the most to paint everything, playing with its size and softness all the time

MAGIK

Perfect for an expressive and painterly style

PENCILLER

Used to emulate real brushstrokes

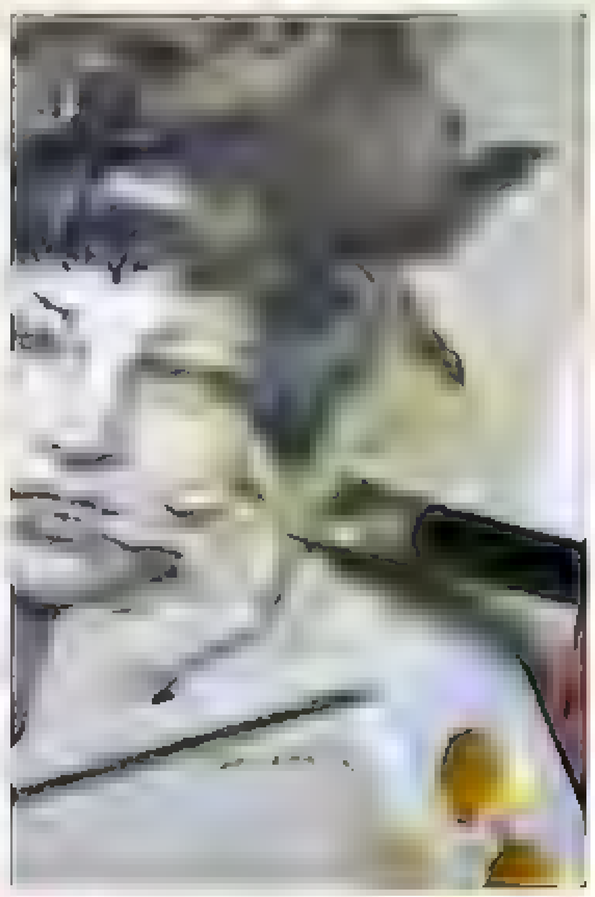


6 Simple paint palette

It's time to start painting, and I begin with gouache. I stick to a muted palette of just a few colours: sepia, yellow, black and white. The idea is to stay quick and loose. Gouache isn't a transparent medium, and you don't glaze with it. I use it to push certain specific areas, such as the rose on the right, the collar and the arm into the background. This enables me to place the emphasis of the picture on the face of my character

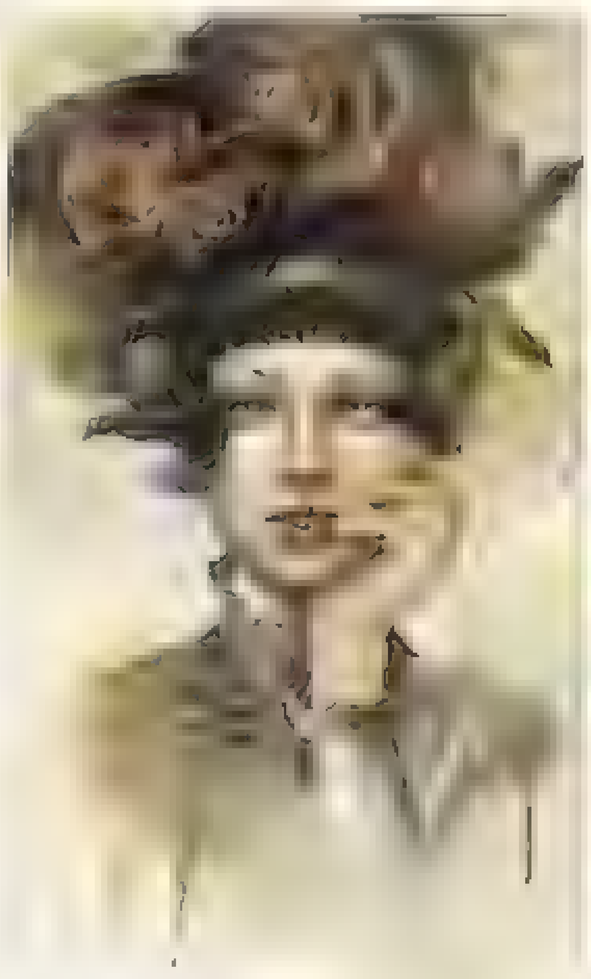
7 Play with your strokes

Notice that I don't touch the face too much; I just place a wash of yellow on its right-hand side. This is the focal point of my painting, and that's why it's the place where I try to keep the blackest blacks. Don't hold back from playing with strokes: here, I make big bold marks and paint drips of paint to create that painterly look. At some point I also doodle with a blue coloured pencil. I'm just having fun!



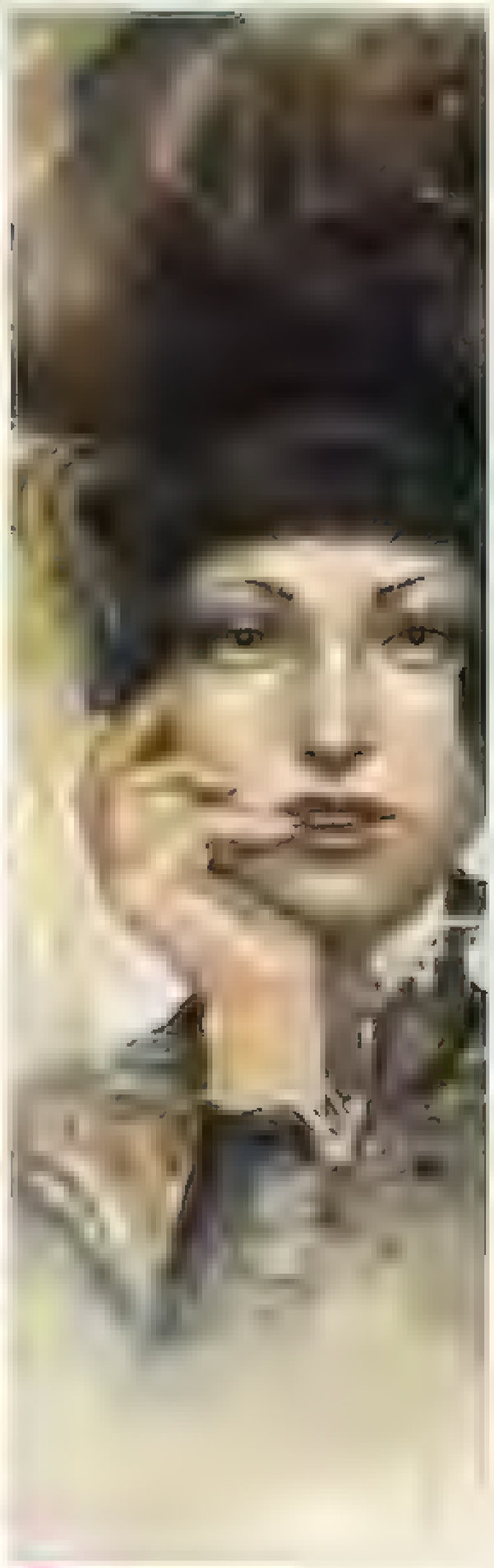
8 Scan Into Photoshop

Now that my painting is dry, I can scan it and begin to play with it in Photoshop. Since I've decided to create a mixed media image, I'll only focus on the face and hand, and leave the rest of the image almost as is. I begin to paint the flesh over my drawing slowly on a Multiply layer with a pinkish brown tint. I'll only use a small number of layers during the entire process



9 Selective brush usage

I use only a handful of Photoshop brushes. They're regular Round brushes along with a couple of custom ones that I use all the time when I want to create a painterly effect. I just increase the values slowly, with Opacity rarely more than 20 per cent. I like to create a fairly realistic result, but I don't go mad with the level of detail because I'm keen for the face and hand to blend with the loose background



10 Iron out those errors

I flip the image, and I quickly can see some flaws here and there: one eye isn't placed particularly well, her mouth looks too narrow and the sparkles in her eyes are too big. Flipping an image is a good way to highlight incorrect elements that don't jump out at you at first. I can also see that my composition is slightly unbalanced; there's something a little wrong with the headdress compared to the placement of the hand.

11 Maintain balance

I decide to complete the lines of force by adding a wing to the little bird on the upper left corner. It's important to keep a well balanced composition. You may not see it at first, but you can certainly feel when something's unbalanced; it makes the viewer feel uncomfortable. This little wing is just a couple of strokes, nothing too defined, but it complements the petals at the far right. Its general silhouette mirrors it upside down

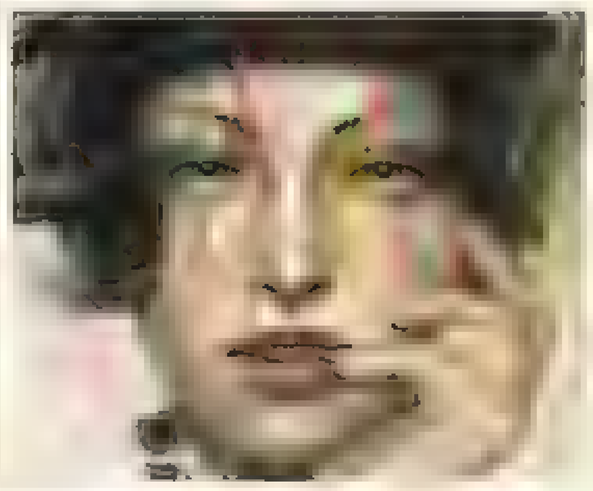


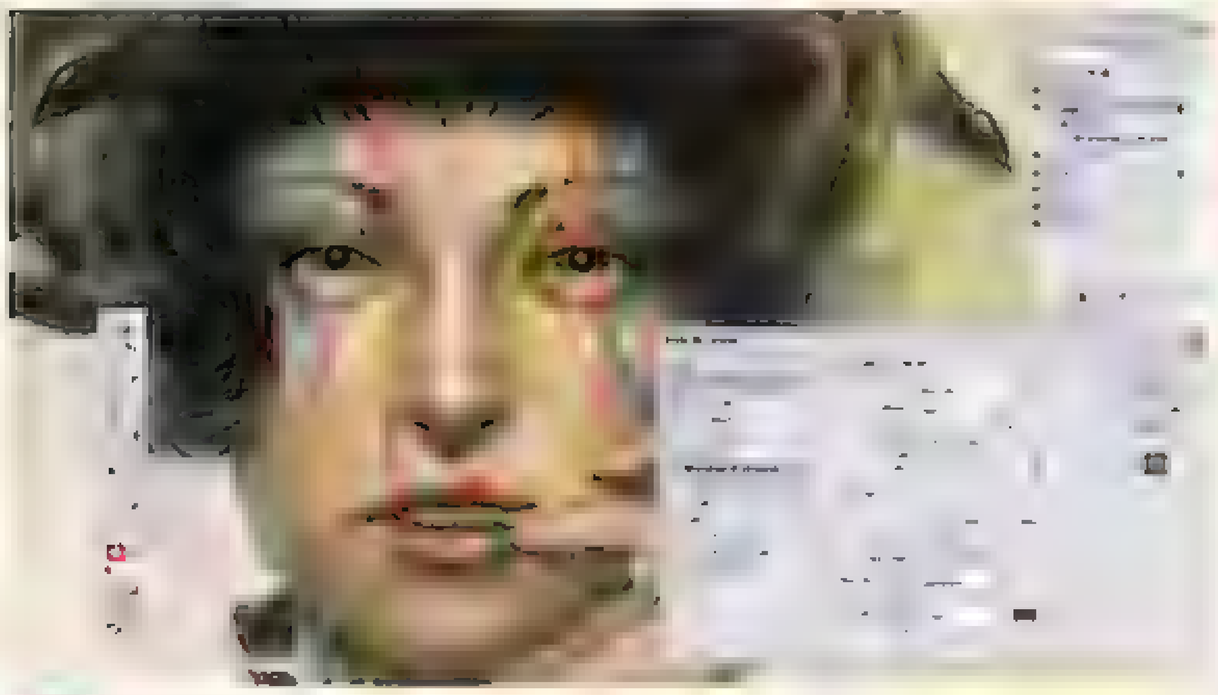
12 Light sources

I now go back to refining the skin. I try to always keep in mind where my light sources come from and what shadows they produce on the face. I have the light of the sun from up above, and another light source right behind her. The colour of the skin isn't just pink: it's warmer and yellowish where the light hits it directly, a little more red around the nose, the eyes and the fingertips, and colder and blue in the shadows underneath the nose, the cheekbones and the neck

13 Strong colours

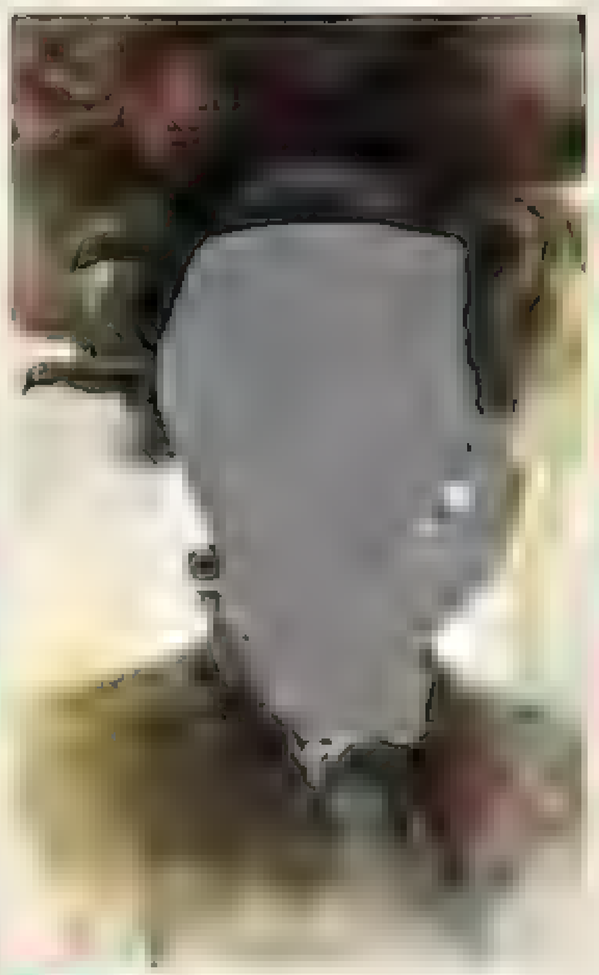
When the level of detail on the character's face looks right to me, I begin to add drips of vivid colours falling from her brow. Even though the subject matter of this image is the paint itself, it amuses me to think that the drips of paint are actually digital paint placed on top of a traditional drawing. This is my subtle way of giving a little depth to this image so that its not just the portrait of a cute girl.





14 Realistic drops

I use the Bevel and Emboss filter to add a quick 3D effect to the drips. By playing with the opacity of my brush I'm able to create some subtle changes to the thick acrylic substance of the paint. The paint slowly runs down and affects the lips and fingernails.



PRO SECRETS

Don't be afraid to fail

Many aspiring artists I know paint digitally because they're afraid of ruining a drawing or painting that's on a sheet of paper. Here's a suggestion: buy yourself a cheap sketchpad and allow yourself an entire month to draw on it every day. Draw from life, reference or your imagination and don't be afraid to produce utter rubbish! Call it your warm-up sketchpad.

15 Paper texture

I don't want my image to look like a collage with a very painterly and loose background sitting behind a very digital-looking face and hand. So I place a painted paper texture of my own on an Overlay layer on top of the face and hand. You can search online for such textures easily enough, but you also can paint them by yourself on real paper and scan it. This will then be your texture and nobody else's



16 Happy accidents

Finally, I add a Curves Adjustment Layer on top of all layers. This method always brings surprises and colour ideas that I wouldn't have found myself. It's just the little reward I'm looking for to say "Hey! Now I'm done!" The image ends up with that typically melancholic blue/greenish tint made popular by a certain smartphone software that everybody loves these days (which I won't name here, but you know the one I mean).

PRO SECRETS

Have some fun

When you plan to make a living in art, it's easy to focus on technique, what you think people want from you or your shortcomings, and then forget about the pleasure of just letting your mind help you form an image on a piece of paper. Art is a serious thing for the aspiring artist, but it shouldn't be too serious, or you won't be able to touch other people's hearts.

MAKE THE DIGITAL LOOK TRADITIONAL

Yi Ao Dubbit shows how to limit the use of colour, but add contrast, to give digital art a traditional look

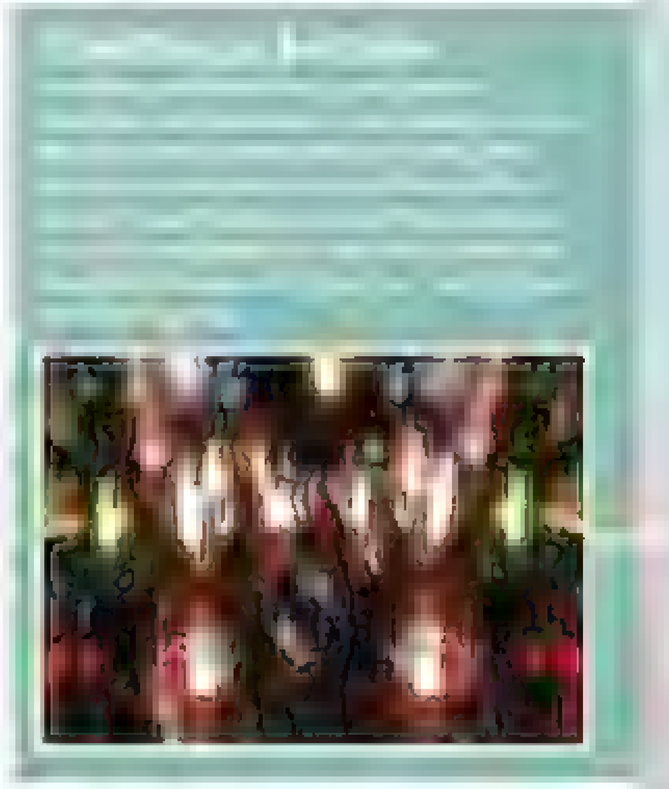


Originally, I painted this work for a magazine published in Japan. The editor said I must use the functions of Photoshop as much as possible, but also that I could draw what I want. So this art has an aspect of personal work.

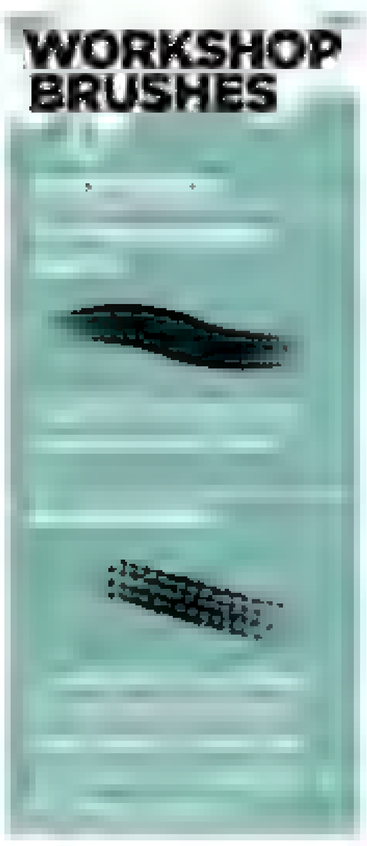
The story is about a girl in a strange dream. A group of rabbit-headed men are there to protect her. She's not able to open her eyes, but she feels safe. The rabbits propose that she leap from this cliff. She has no idea of what's waiting for her at the far side. It's time for her to decide.

This artwork is based on one of my doodles. It has a unique composition, but at the same time it also has a slightly dark atmosphere that might be associated with kidnapping or ill-treatment. Therefore, I lightened the mood by using a bright colour scheme and tweaking the girl's facial expression.

I put conflicting things together – concrete shapes and abstract, story and philosophy, traditional painting style and technology. You can see my favourite style in this work, and how I mix realistic and traditional objects with abstract shapes.







tional look

Photoshop

BE CLEVER WITH YOUR COLOURS

Give a scene of battling monsters extra visual punch by incorporating a complementary colour scheme. [illegible] is your referee

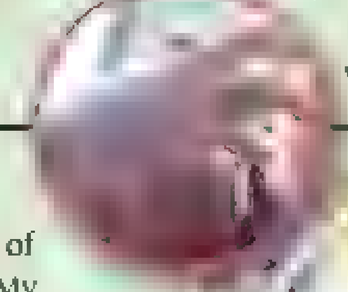
Colour was one of the hardest concepts for me to grasp as an artist. The first eight years of my professional career were spent working almost exclusively in black and white. I've spent the past several years creating a workflow that gives me a huge amount of control over colour. This workflow has taught me a lot about how colour works and how best to use it.

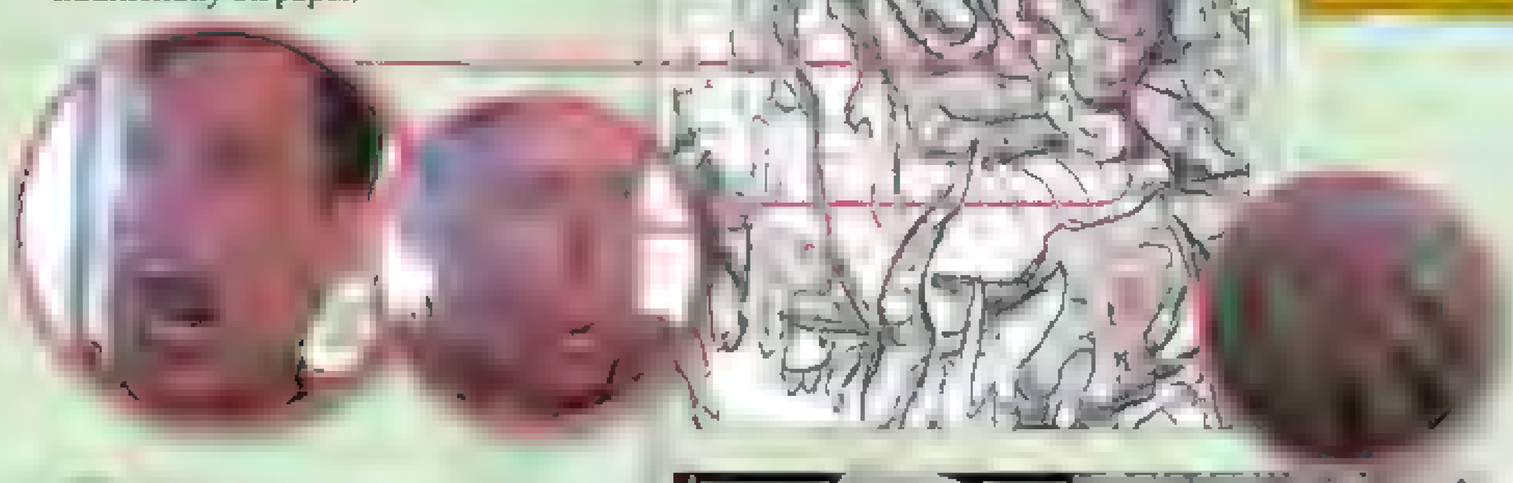
With a combination of brush choices and layer settings I can tightly control my colour, or I can allow it to become very chaotic and unexpected, resulting in a lot of happy accidents. This workshop focuses on how I go about creating a painting while limiting my colour palette to a red and green complementary colour scheme.

I specialise in monsters in my work, so this painting centres around a pair of battling beasts. This enables me to make one monster primarily red while the other is primarily green.

Beyond just colour usage, this workshop will give me a chance to share with you my thoughts on references, how I prepare my drawing for the painting process, and how I structure my painting layers in Photoshop. I'll be looking to the natural world around me – mostly my garden and those things that live there – to be my reference source and influence for this painting. Utilising references effectively is one of the best ways to create a believable image, even when the subject matter is completely fantastical. References, drawing and colour usage: I'll cover it all!







1 Digital sketch

I start with a few photos of the perfect monster reference. My model is always available, which enables me to quickly get sketching. I work digitally at first, so that I can edit while working out my ideas. Resizing, flipping and moving elements is easier to address digitally, but for the drawing I'm working traditionally on paper.





2 Final drawing

Using the digital sketch as my guide I move forward on the drawing. The photo reference is even more important now that I'm finalising the concept. There's so much that can be used in the reference to help make the monstrous forms more realistic and believable. I'm using a black Prismacolor colour pencil on Bienfang Graphics 360 marker paper. I've used these drawing materials exclusively for the past 10 years, and swear by them.



3 Image flow

It's crucial to ensure that the image flows and directs the eye to where it needs to go when looking at the painting. Directing the eye with the pointing tentacles is a great way to make sure the "star" of the painting is the focus. Every drawing or painting needs a "star" and as the artist it's your job to make sure the viewer knows who or what to look at. ↣

4 Drawing preparation

I duplicate the drawing into two layers in Photoshop. I reduce the opacity of the bottom drawing-layer to 21 per cent and then apply a four-pixel Gaussian Blur (Filter>Blur>Gaussian Blur) The top drawing layer is reduced to 49 per cent Opacity. I merge these layers together (Layer>Merge Down/Merge Layers), and apply a four-pixel Median Noise filter to the new layer (Filter>Noise>Median).



5 Turn lines into tones

By processing the drawing I now have a more receptive drawing to paint on top of. Instead of tight line work of black on white, I now have grey tones and gradients to work with. Furthermore, while maintaining my guide for the painting I now have a drawing layer that will be much easier to incorporate into the final painting.



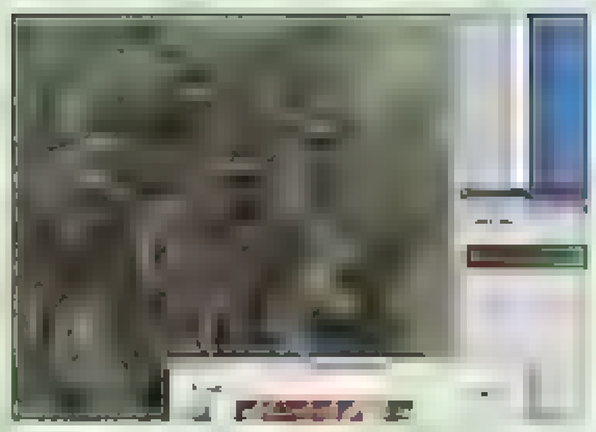
6 Value build-up

I add a new layer on top of the drawing layer and set it to Multiply. I fill this layer with a medium grey. On top of this medium grey layer I add a new layer set to Soft Light and reduce it to 60 per cent Opacity. Using black and white I work fast and loose to build up the tonal underpainting. This doesn't need to be perfect. I find that the looser and more chaotic this is, the better it is to build off of



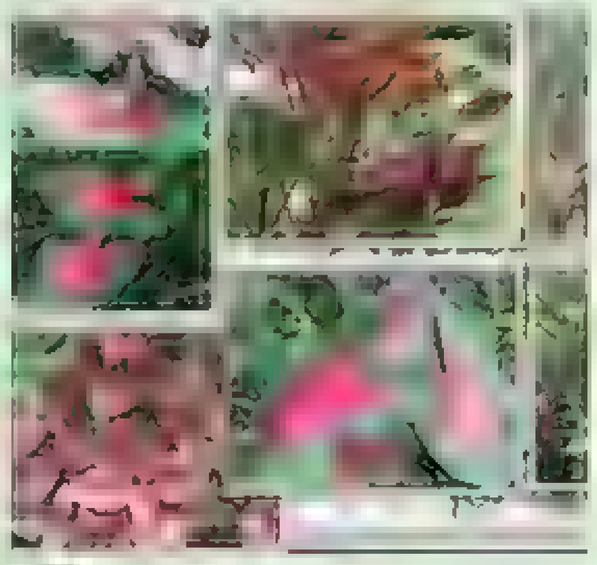
PRO SECRETS

WORKSHOP BRUSHES



7 Gradient Map layer adjustment

I apply a Gradient Map to a new layer and reduce it to 60 per cent Opacity (Image>Adjustments>Gradient Map) Because this piece has a complementary colour scheme, I pick a deep red for the darker range of the gradient and a bright green for the lighter range of the gradient I can add in more colour levels for the darkest darks, middle values and lightest lights, but for most of my work I find that a two-colour gradient works wel.



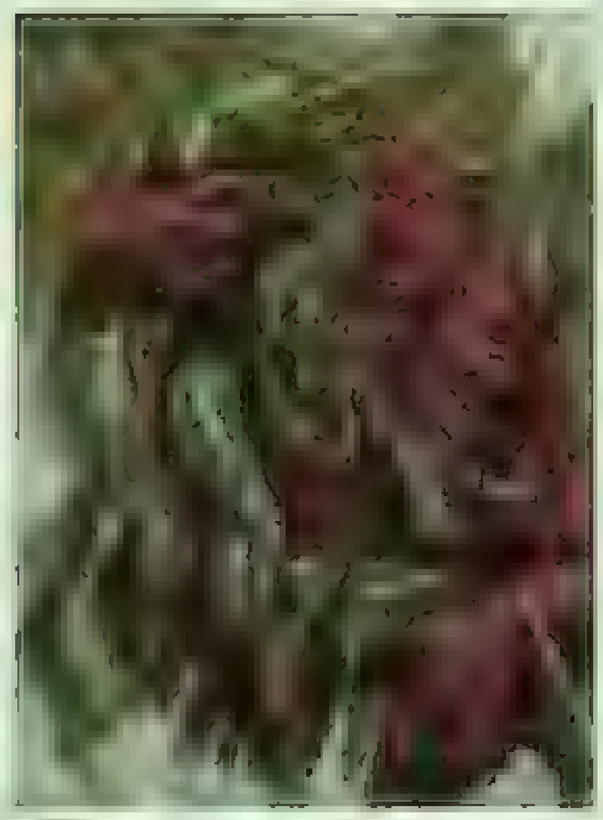
8 Natural references

A quick trip to the garden provides me with everything I need to know about naturalistic reds and greens. Pulling from my references guides my artistic choices to make my fantastical creatures that much more believable. Now that I have naturalistic colours to choose from for a starting point, the rest of my colour decisions are better informed



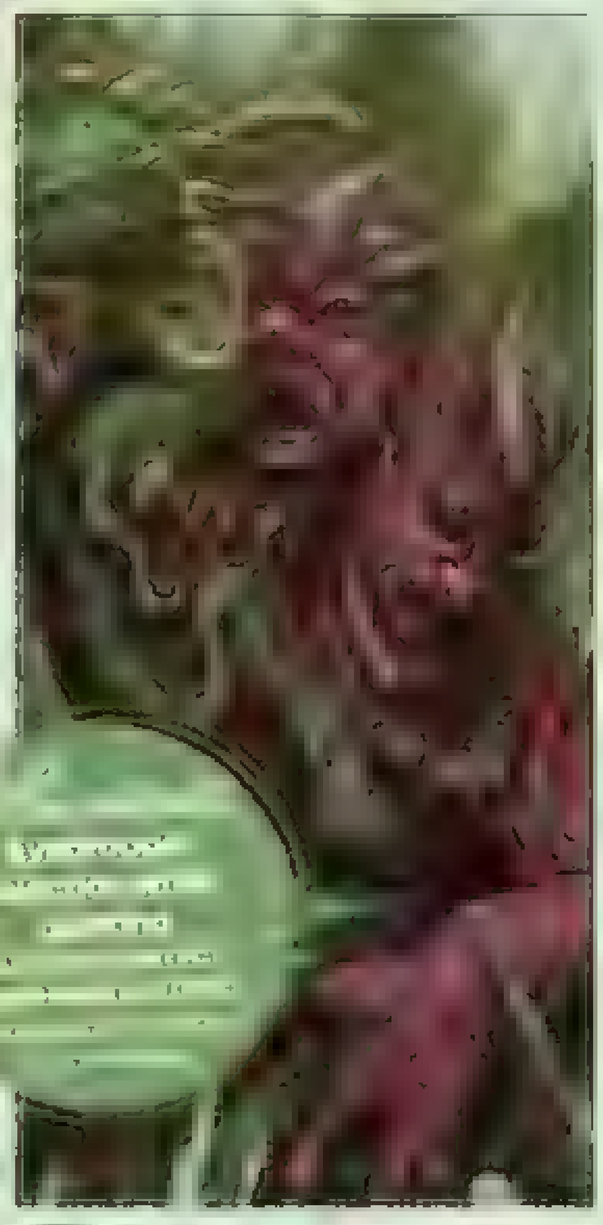
9 Start underpainting

I begin my underpainting on a Hard Light layer, concentrating on colour The layers below help with the value structure. I work the colour all over the piece quickly, allowing for happy accidents. For me this is an exciting part of the painting. I work reds into the greens and greens into the reds to make the image more interesting and naturalistic



10 Back to front

On a Normal layer I begin painting and working up the background. The background can be loose and have a lower contrast, so I keep the colour and values similar while building up the forest backdrop. I only need to imply the forest; tight rendering is a waste of energy at this point. There'll be plenty of time later to add more to the background if it's needed



11 Painting the pugilists

On a new Normal layer I begin working on the figures. I move around the painting without focusing or overworking any one area too much, which avoids any one area from pulling in too much focus too soon I continue to work reds into the green areas and greens into the red areas. This interworking of colour helps to build greater visual cohesiveness.

12 Building up the detail

Now that the entire piece has been addressed on a general level, it's time to start increasing the detail on the key areas, using my photo references. The viewer generally focuses on faces and hands, so this is where the most attention and detail should go



13 Layering in the colours and details

I continue to pull colour from my reference and use my photos to better inform my mark making on the faces and hands. Just because I'm working with just red and green doesn't mean the entire painting is bright red and bright green. Placing a green next to a warm grey will make that grey feel red, which is why it's important to include the opposing colour in the shadows.



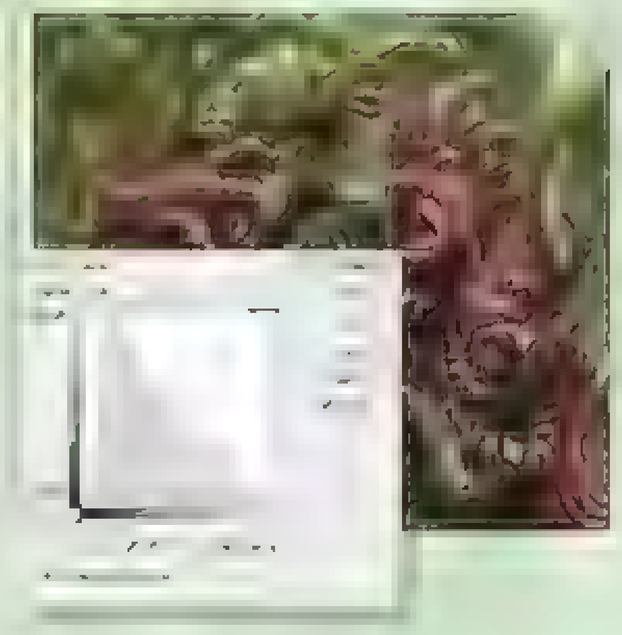
14 Remember the importance of the drawing

The drawing continues to be very important to my painting. Since it's no longer tight lines but rather grey tones, it blends more effectively into the painting. The drawing helps to add detail to the forms, rather then looking like a drawing under colours. The drawing is often the darkest darks in the painting. By building up the colour layers the way I have, the drawing isn't black, but dark values of colour



15 Curves adjustment

Now that the painting is mostly finished it's time to adjust the overall brightness of the painting. My paintings tend to turn out a little duller then I want them, but this can be quickly corrected I select the entire canvas and then copy merge and paste the painting on to a new flattened layer (Edit>Copy Merged and Edit>Paste). I now adjust the Curves on this new flattened layer to best effect (Image>Adjustments>Curves)



PRO SECRETS



16 Final detailing

It's now time for the fun details and last adjustments. I love to have my monsters drooling, spitting and covered with slime. These details are best left to the end and are my reward for putting all the time and effort needed to complete the painting. I paint all these last details on their own Normal layer, just in case I need to edit them for the client. This is also the time to go in and add a last layer of general detail to the important areas.



17 Colour adjustment

Some of the areas of the water and tentacles are still a little drab and could use some additional colour. I add a new layer set to Overlay and paint in a more vibrant colour. I adjust the layer's Opacity to ensure the colour isn't too overpowering, while still creating a richer look.



18 Final texture layer

I add one final layer of texture over the entire piece. I add a new layer and set it to Overlay, then select a very desaturated bright red and green and just go crazy with my texture brush. Because the layer is set to Overlay, the texture will brighten the highlights and add noise to otherwise flat areas of the painting. Once I'm happy with the amount of texture I've added, I reduce the Opacity of this layer to around 30 per cent. And the painting's finished. But the fight's only just begun. ■



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Manga Studio 5

CREATING NEW DOCUMENTS

Don't be put off by the bewildering array of options when creating a new document in Manga Studio 5. **PJ Holden** explains them all

Manga Studio 5 and 5 EX feature a startlingly large set of options for new documents, all focused around print publication and comics. These can be very daunting for a new user, especially since many of the options are specifically set up for Manga rather than US or European styled comics.

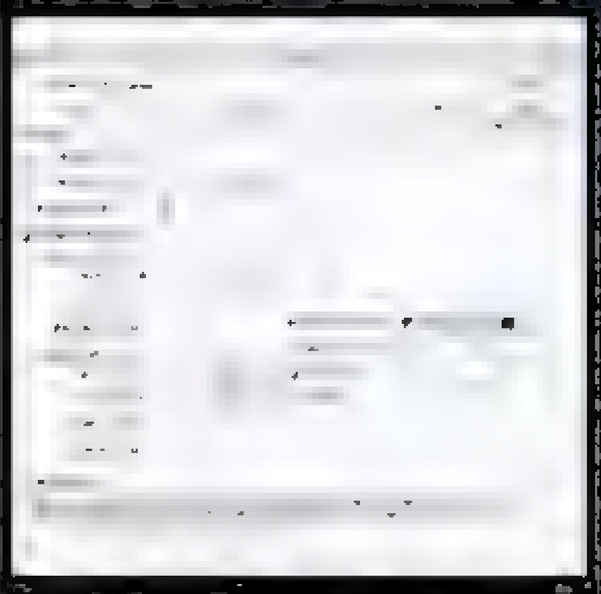
The only difference between Manga Studio 5 and 5 EX is that in EX you have the ability to include work with multiple page documents. In both, you need to think first about the size and specs of your page (or pages), then the panels, and finally the default layers and colours on that page. Luckily, it's easy to set and save presets, which means that the second time you create a new file you can quickly move from creating the document to drawing in it. That's exactly what you'll learn to do here.

1 Understanding paper sizes

Print comics (just like all kinds of print publications, really) have three important measurements: live area, print area and bleed area. In Manga Studio, these are called Default Border (inner), Binding (finish) size and Paper Size. Although Manga Studio will enable you to set a Bleed Width as well, keeping this to zero greatly simplifies your settings. Once you've set these sizes you can easily save this configuration as a preset.

2 Understanding presets and templates

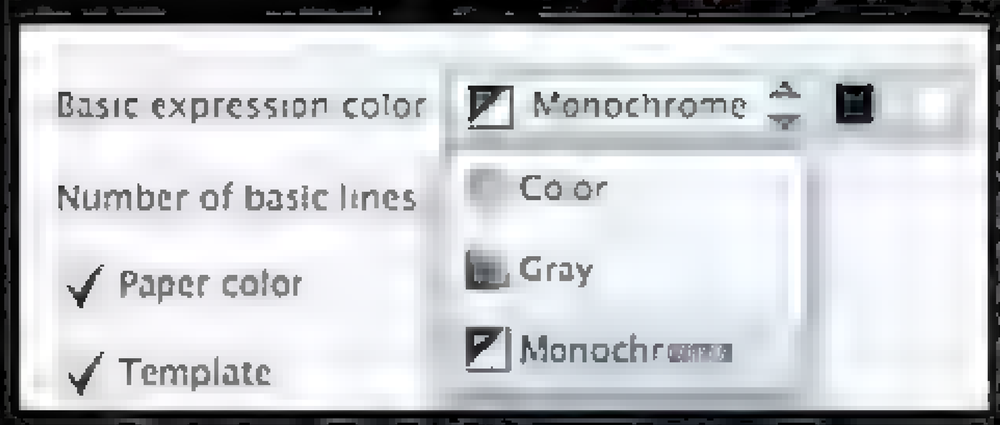
A preset in Manga Studio describes the various sizes for the page and can – although often doesn't – include a specific template. A template is a set of panel folders (dividing the page into panels) that can be applied to any paper size. This means that a new document can consist of any one of the existing presets (or a new page size) and a combination of any of the existing templates. In other words, a document comprises pages plus panels.





Express yourself

You need to set a Basic Expression Colour for any new document in Manga Studio. This is a fancy way of describing the default layer type. Monochrome and Grey layers can use up to three colours: transparent, black or white. The black and white buttons determine whether those colours are allowed on the layer.



Artist PROFILE

PJ Holden

COUNTRY: Northern Ireland



PJ Holden has been a professional comic artist for over a decade, drawing predominantly for 2000 AD on judges Dredd, Rogue Trooper and more. He's also the co-creator of Numberwang with Si Spurrier.

www.pauljholden.com

WORKING WITH MULTIPLE-PAGE DOCUMENTS

A. Multiple Pages
Select either a single page document or a multiple page story management file

B. Number of Pages
Just what it says on the tin. How many pages do you want in your comic?

C. Spread Corresponding Page
Joins any facing pages together to create double-page spreads

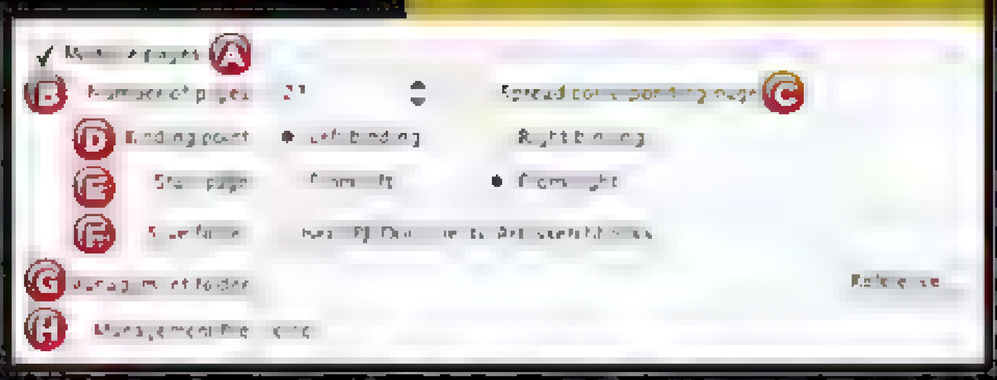
D. Binding Point
US/UK comics have left binding, while Manga comics are usually right binding

E. Start Page
US/UK comics usually start from the left. Manga usually starts from the right

F. Save folder
The location where you want to store the management folder. Set by pressing the Reference button

G. Management Folder
Name of the folder (within the save folder) to store the management file and the individual pages

H. Management File
The name of the management file – this holds the details for every page in the story



Illustrator & Photoshop

GET STARTED IN ILLUSTRATOR

Master the basics of Illustrator in partnership with Photoshop to create a unique and detailed illustration. **Tom Mac** doubles the fun factor

In this workshop I'll teach you how to use the basic functions of Illustrator to great effect, particularly when combined with Photoshop. There are fundamental differences between the two programs, and although a lot of people are comfortable drawing and painting in Photoshop, Illustrator (as the name suggests) provides an alternative solution for creating and finishing professional-grade illustrations that hold their own in today's competitive environment.

Whether it's for commercial purposes or just for artistic experimentation, I would recommend learning the basics of the software to let your own unique artistic flare take a step in a different direction.

Using Illustrator and Photoshop hand in hand, I'll talk through using shapes to build up a stylistic form, instead of the more traditional freehand methods, as well as applying textures and well-placed effects to give your work a unique and modern feel – even if the context has a historic or more traditional aesthetic.

Artist PROFILE

Tom Mac

COUNTRY: England



A specialist in illustration, Tom also works in a variety of creative mediums. He's employed at Galvanize in London's Covent Garden and has previously worked both alone and with a variety of agencies across on projects for clients that include Sony, Jeep, Nickelodeon and Discovery Channel.

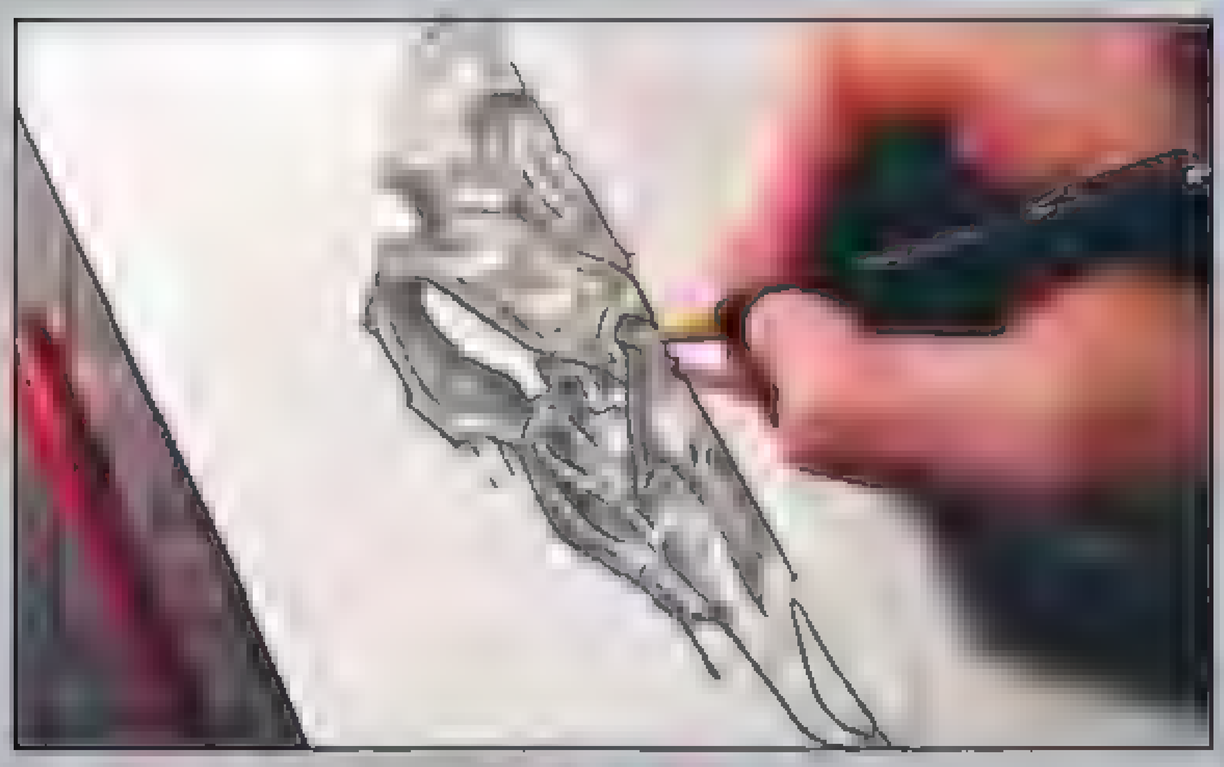
www.tommacdraws.co.uk

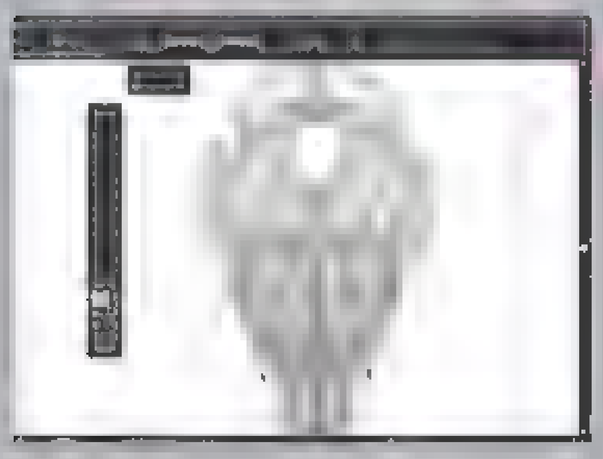
DIRECT LINK FOR WORKSHOP FILES

z-illustrator

1 Initial sketch

Every piece of work starts with a sketch. I've worked in some style to the sketch, including thick outlines and basic shading. Once this is complete, I scan or photograph it carefully, and turn it into a JPG or PNG. Due to the nature of what I'm drawing, I only need to sketch half of the skull. Once this is done, I take it into Photoshop and mirror it symmetrically, then save out again ready for use.





2 Into Illustrator

Open Illustrator and set up a new document. I usually work in an A3 document. Due to the nature of vectors, it doesn't matter what size doc you use at this stage, because the final illustration will be taken into Photoshop for shading and final composition. Once your document is set up, place your scanned sketch on to the canvas by selecting File>Place.

This particular piece of work is inspired by the styles of the past. I've aimed to merge particular elements of the Middle Ages and Tudor time periods, while attempting to mix that all up in a modern way with my own unique illustrative style. The result will be simply structured, but highly detailed and artistic. Using the guidelines of this workshop you'll be able to create something similar. Try to use it as a basis to mould around your own personal interests or individual visual style of working.

3 Set up your layers

You can adjust the position and size of the sketch by selecting the Black Arrow. Once you have the sketch at a comfortable size, reduce the Opacity of it to between 20 and 40 percent by moving the bar slider on the Transparency tool palette (if this isn't visible, select Window>Transparency). Then lock your layer. Name it something like Background and then add a new layer above it. This new layer is the one we'll begin to work on over the top of the sketch.

➤➤



Shortcuts

Send to Front or Back

Ctrl+[or] (PC)

Cmd+[or] (Mac)

Ideal for managing your vector shapes in Illustrator.



4 Illustrator basics

Using the Pen tool, start to work your way around the sketch. This too, works in a dot-to-dot function – the fewer points, the better, because this will make it a lot easier to create smooth curves. Before you start to do this, make sure both the Fill and Color boxes at the base of the tool box are set to empty. Once created, use the Convert Anchor Point tool to smooth out the lines. Note that this may take a bit of practice and patience.



5 Working with strokes

Now you need to add a stroke. Do this by selecting the Fill Stroke box at the base of the tool box, double-clicking it and selecting your colour. The darker the colour the better (I've gone for pure black), but colours can be easily altered at any stage of the process. On the A3 document, I'm working this particular stroke at around 5 pixels; however, keep a nice variety of sizes spread out. Use finer strokes for detail and fatter strokes for outline.



6 Finishing strokes

When you're happy with your stroke size, the end needs to be sharpened to avoid messy-looking flat ends. Do this with the Width tool; go to the end of the stroke and pinch it inwards. This will often affect the entire length, so if this happens make sure you pick a point further up from the pointed end and then, with the same tool, pull out to fatten up.





7 Filling the image

Now start to cover the sketch. Copying and Pasting sections and then flipping horizontally to cover more ground can be handy as long as it's done sparingly. Fill in the larger areas of shade and join some of the strokes up using the Fill option. Build these shapes up alongside the strokes for maximum effect.



8 Work in some colour

The main structure of the work will be starting to take shape. Now you need to start working colour into it. Lock the layer you're working on and create a new one. Name the new layer and drag it underneath the last layer. Using a variety of tones, begin to build up blocks of colour to add more definition. Because you're working underneath the outline, you won't need to smooth your edges – they should fit nicely underneath.

PRO SECRETS

Tracing in Illustrator

To get the best out of Illustrator I recommend tracing existing imagery as your starting point. In this particular workshop I've chosen to begin with a sketch. However, your work can often gain a more realistic edge – or just save you some precious time – by using a photograph. Just make sure this is either taken by yourself or you have permission to use it.

Shortcuts

Duplicate

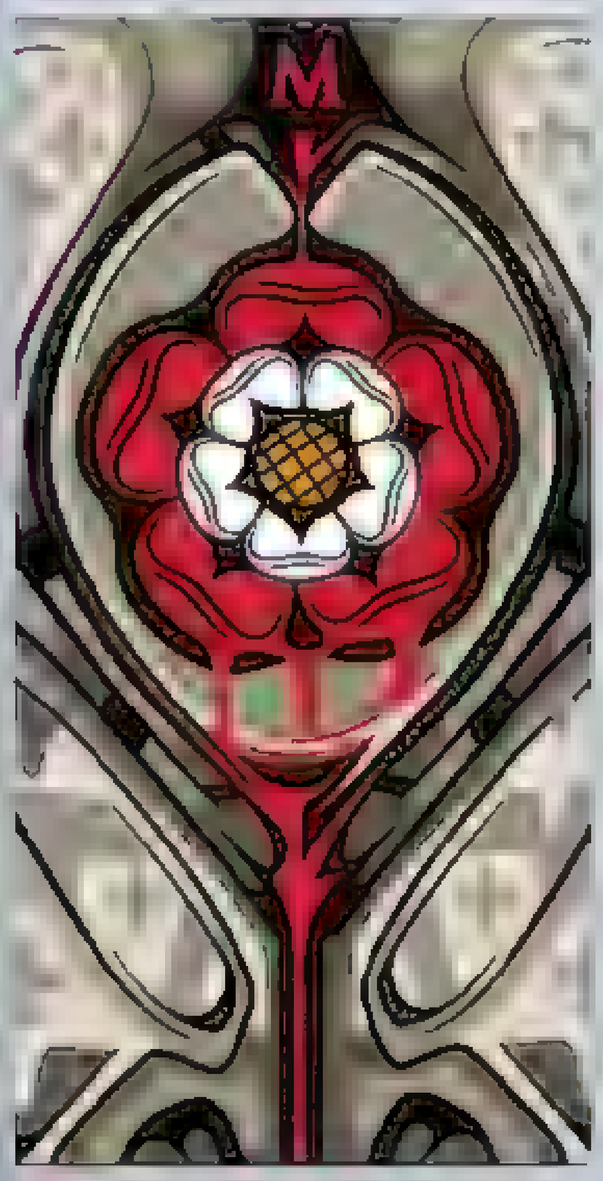
Alt+drag out shape (PC & Mac)

Useful when creating more than one of the same vector shape in Illustrator.



9 Introduce detail

Once both the outlines and the fill colours are finished, create a new layer on top and start to work the two into each other. This is done well by cleverly applying blocks of colour and making it appear as if the outline is cutting into the colour and vice versa. Detail is key here – add as much as you can without it looking too heavy on just one colour or shade.



10 Finalising the design

I create the Tudor style patterns using the Pen tool and repeat them to add extra depth. I also include some bold colour – the rose on the skull's forehead. Make sure you're happy with the image so far – colour, detail and shade – before moving it into the next phase.

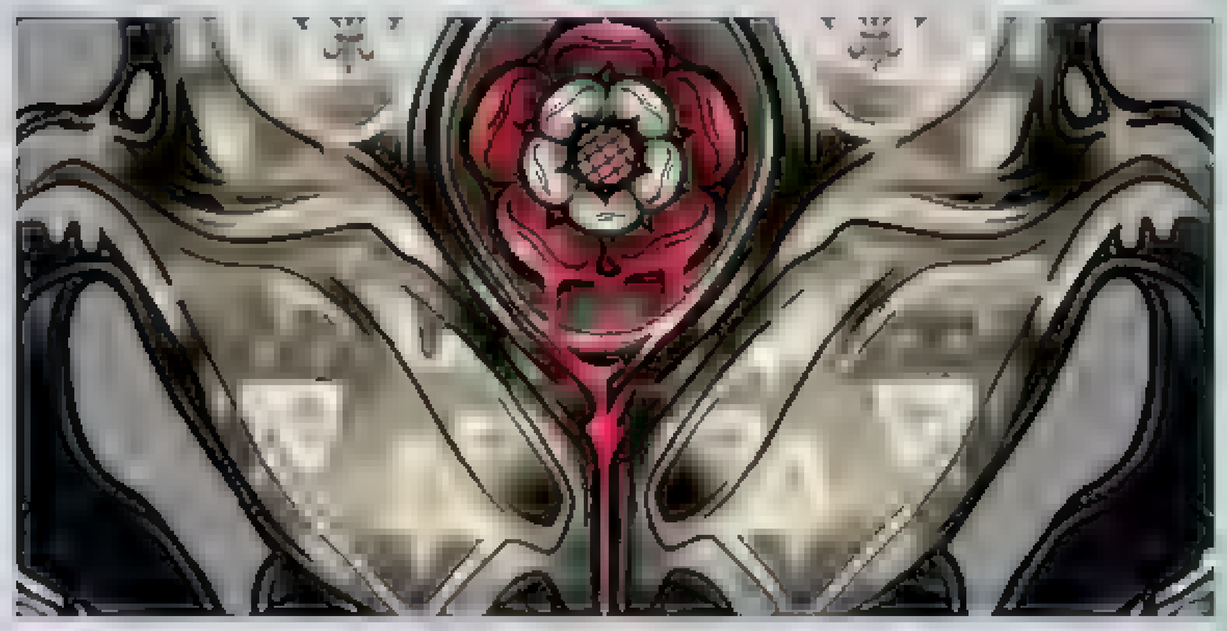
11 Bring into Photoshop

Open a new document in Photoshop – I recommend an RGB A3 portrait at 300dpi. Go back to your Illustrator file and unlock all your layers. Using the black arrow, select your entire illustration, then Copy>Paste. Comp it to the size you want and then lock that layer off. Shading is split into three; dark, light and coloured. It's important that you keep your layers organised, because of the nature of this process. Create individual group folders for all three of these shading approaches.



12 Shading the image

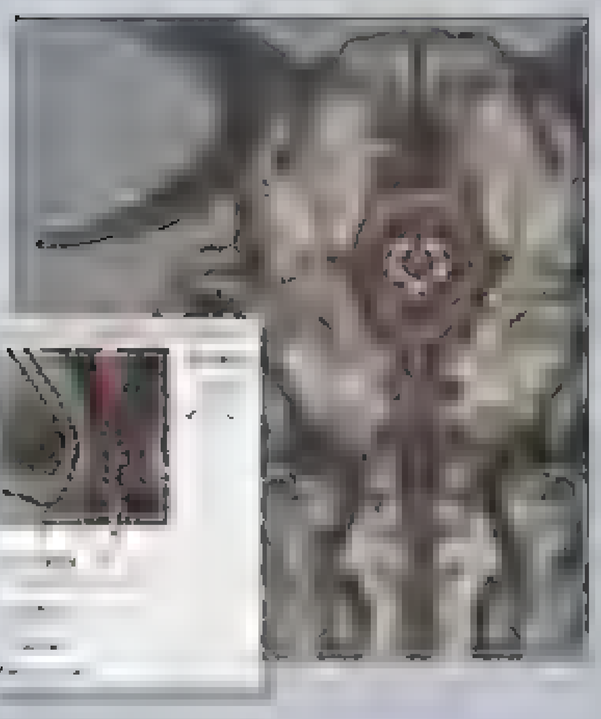
Shading itself is simple. Start with the dark, then use the Pen tool to mark out the desired areas. Then right-click and select Make Selection. When selected, take the Gradient Tool and drag out your shade. I advise you play around with the transparency on the individual layer, and create new ones for new shades. This is time consuming, but it really starts to bring the work out. Repeat the same for the light shade. When tackling the coloured gradients, try to work at blending two tones together.



13 Grain effects

Now select all your shaded layers, including the illustration, and duplicate and merge them together. Take the merged illustration, duplicate it again and select Filter>Noise>Add Noise. Crank the level up to about a quarter of the way along and press OK. On the same layer choose Image>Adjustments>Brightness and Contrast. Whack the contrast all the way up and press OK. Now you need to reduce the opacity of the layer to about 10 per cent over the top of the original shaded illustration.





14 Shield and texture

It's time to start building up the other elements. Back in Illustrator, create a shield shape using the same Pen Tool techniques. Try to build up some extra strokes inside it, to add depth. Then bring it into a new Photoshop document, apply the shading treatment and add a texture. Here I've taken a photo of my wooden desk. Import that and alter the size of it to cover the area. Then select Edit>Adjustments>Desaturate, pick Hard Light in the Layer panel and reduce the Opacity. Once complete, delete the excess texture.

15 A pair of pistols

In another separate Photoshop document, create these with the same process, including texture. Remember that with examples like this, you'll only need to make one that you can then Copy>Paste and flip horizontally. Pay particular attention to the shading with these. This can really help enhance the ornamental value and the solid wood and metal aesthetic, and push the artistic feel of the piece.



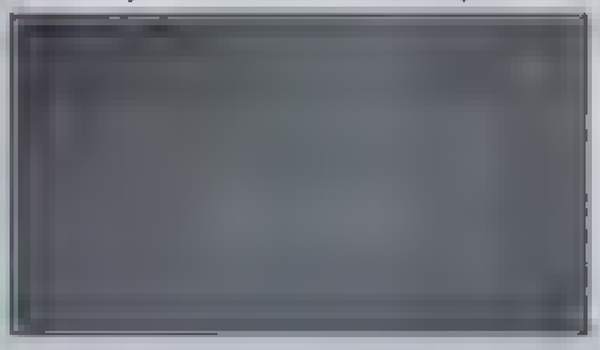
PRO SECRETS

Expanding your strokes

Working with strokes in Illustrator has many benefits. However, the pixel width they're set to doesn't change if they're enlarged or reduced in size, so if you're changing the size of your illustration this may affect the overall aesthetic. A way of tackling this problem is to make sure your strokes are always Expanded (turned into their own shape). You can do this by selecting one and using the Expand drop-down menu.

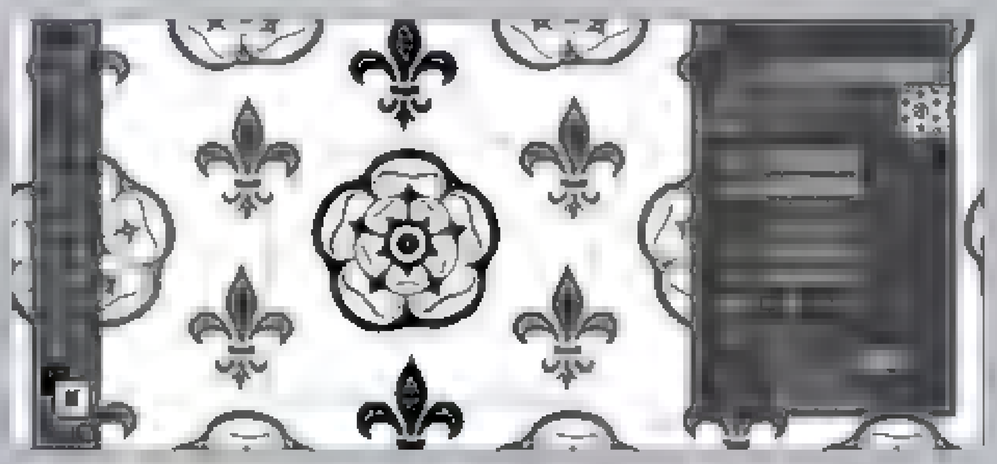
16 Background

The trick with this is to create something that has an identity, but doesn't detract from the illustration. For this, find a nice mix of light and dark from the centre outwards. Stick to a neutral scheme. Experiment with textures here, and add more than one. I use a licence-free marble effect and chop it up. Once this is finalised, merge it together and adjust Brightness and Contrast if necessary, to add or reduce its impact.



17 Creating patterns in Illustrator

Using the patterns from the skull, and making sure they're only of one colour, I merge these elements and select Object>Pattern>Make. Adjust the settings to make the pattern seamless. Create a new shape and fill it with the pattern. Bring it into your background PSD, add Linear Dodge (Add) as a layer style and lower the opacity to under 10 per cent.





18 Final composition

Lock the background layer and compile your elements. Make sure the scale is right, and that certain parts don't become lost. When you're happy, duplicate those layers and merge them. Finally, adjust the brightness and contrast, add some grain, and experiment with some subtle colour gradients over the top.

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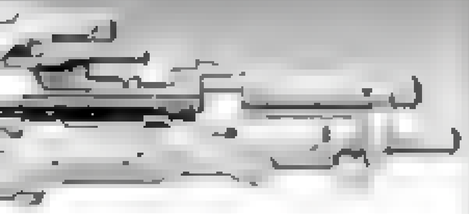
GUN FEVER!

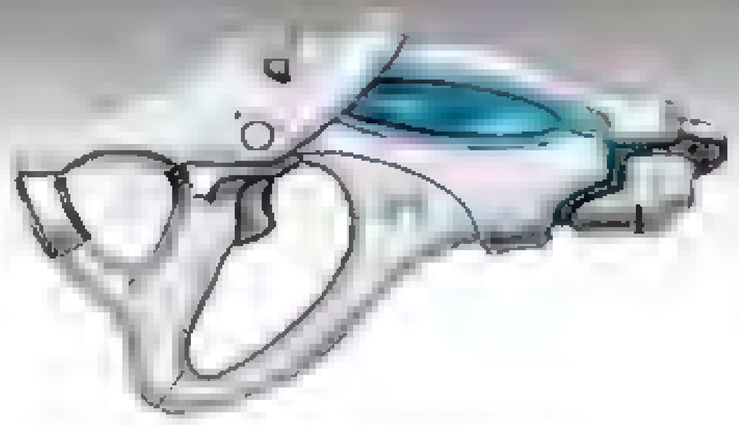
15 EXPLOSIVE TIPS ON CREATING DEADLY WEAPONS, WITH ARTIST BRIAN SUM

















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Painter X3

PERSPECTIVE TIPS USING PAINTER

If you want to depict linear perspective in your art accurately and easily, then take a look at Corel's Painter X3, says **Don Seegmiller**

Learning to create images with correct linear perspective has always been a challenge for most artists. Those that already have a working knowledge of perspective often spend a great deal of time producing grids that can be used as overlays when creating their images. The process is not generally considered fun.

With the release of Corel's Painter X3, the whole tedium of creating accurate linear perspective grids has been simplified, and is almost fun. Painter has, for quite a while, had two-point perspective guides. However, moving simple things like a horizon line or vanishing points was difficult. The interface was confusing, not user friendly, and difficult to use – so most artists didn't.

The newly revamped perspective guides in Painter X3 are simple, intuitive and very easy to use. You don't have to refer to the user manual to figure out how to set up decent two-point perspective guides. It gets even better with the addition of a three-point perspective guide system that's simple to understand, use and customise.

If an easy-to-use guide system were not enough, you can also snap your paint strokes to the perspective guidelines. This makes it straightforward to create a number of custom overlays that can be used in a variety of painting programs.

This workshop will be an overview of the new and user-friendly perspective guides that Corel has introduced. In particular, the three-point linear perspective guide will be shown in use.



1 Sketch an idea

Like most art, it all starts with an idea and a sketch. Most of the time I still work with pencils and sketchbooks when developing ideas. Rarely do I take the time when sketching to make sure that my perspective is spot on. It is, after all, a sketch and not finished art. Once the sketch is scanned the real work of making the image look correct begins. I'll make a lot of changes, clean up and fix problem areas at this early stage. Correcting perspective is often part of this process.



2 Refine the sketch

My ideas often grow and shift as I work the sketch in the early stages. This screenshot shows the drawing with quite a bit of work to the creature, while the background has been simplified. I know the background is going to be some desert cliffs, similar to those found in the national parks where I live. At this point I also decide to give the creature coloration similar to a collared lizard found locally. All this is going through my mind as I clean and refine the drawing.

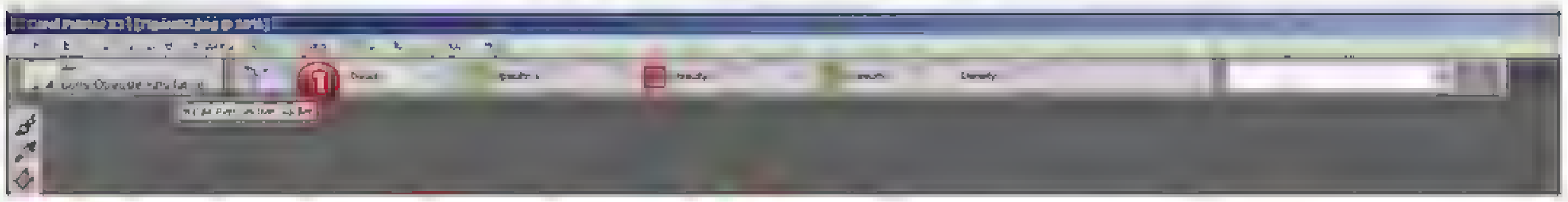
3 Activate the guides

I want to get the perspective of the distant cliffs correct. In the past I would need to construct perspective guides by hand. It can be a tedious process. This is where Painter X3's new perspective guides make things a whole lot easier. With the sketch in Painter, I turn on the guides to help me achieve the correct perspective.

The guides can be turned on two ways either in the top Menu bar, select Canvas> Perspective Guides/Enable Perspective Guides (1), or from the Tool box, select the Perspective guides tool (2). The Property bar for the Perspective Guides then opens at the top of the screen. »

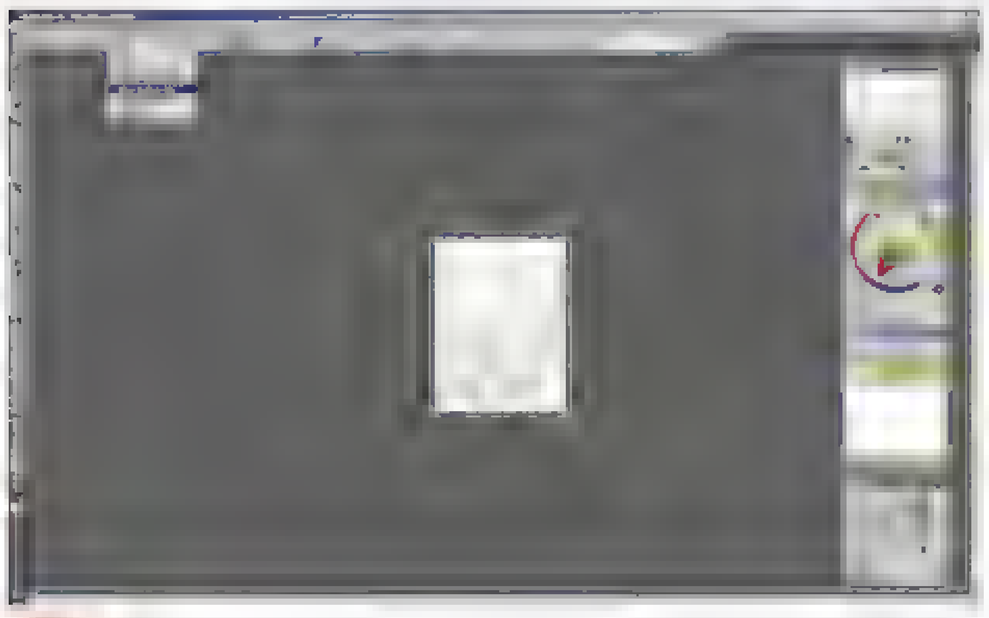






4 Now you see me...

The perspective guides may not be visible. If this is the case then turn them on by clicking the Enable Perspective Guides button (1) This is the first thing to check if you can't see any guides.



5 Three-point perspective

The default two point guides will be visible. From the Preset menu, choose Three-Point Top Down View.



6 Guide to the guides

The default Birds Eye View perspective guides will now be visible. You'll see the red horizon line (1); two green vanishing points located on the horizon line (2); a bottom green vanishing point (3); and two green guidelines originating at each vanishing point. All of the vanishing points can be moved independently by clicking and dragging them. The horizon line will stay locked between the two top vanishing points. The horizon line can be moved by clicking and dragging it. Doing so will move the vanishing points associated with it. All of the guidelines have handles that help change their alignment with their respective vanishing points.



7 Customise the view

Turn on the Intermediate guidelines with the Show/Hide Intermediate Lines button, and change their default colour to a lighter blue while increasing their opacity. By clicking and dragging I raise the horizon line above the image then click and drag all three vanishing points further outside the image borders. Using the guideline handles, I arrange the guidelines to align with the faint lines in the sketch. You can now use the perspective guides to ensure your art is in correct three-point linear perspective.

PRO SECRETS

Know linear perspective



8 Toggle the guides

You'll notice that when a brush is selected the guides outside the image disappear. This is normal behaviour. If you need to make adjustments to the guides, simply toggle their visibility on again with the Perspective Guides button on the Toolbox.

9 Constrain your strokes

With a brush selected, a useful feature becomes available. In the Property bar at the top of the screen is the Perspective Guided Strokes button. With this button active (blue), all of my brush strokes will be constrained to the perspective guides, as well as any space between the actual guides. I don't have to be over a guideline to draw a line in the correct perspective. Here I've drawn a blue box with the Perspective Guided Strokes button active. The strokes appear between the visible guidelines

10 Switch between programs

Most of the time I find myself using Perspective Guided Strokes to quickly draw a perspective grid on a new transparent layer on top of every other layer. This is simply my preference, because I often move the image between various programs and may want the perspective grid visible. Here you can see my image in progress, opened in Photoshop with the perspective grid layer visible. I only delete the grid layer when the image is finished.



11 Correct perspective

Here's the final painting. Notice how the features in the rocky surfaces continue to line up with the original guides. Never has it been simpler to keep the perspective in an image correctly aligned. Hopefully, you can see the power of the perspective guides in Corel Painter X3. While the tool won't replace a firm knowledge of linear perspective, these guides will make using perspective so much easier for all us artists.

PRO SECRETS

Develop a save strategy



Photoshop & Painter

CREATE A PORTRAIT WITH A NEAT TWIST

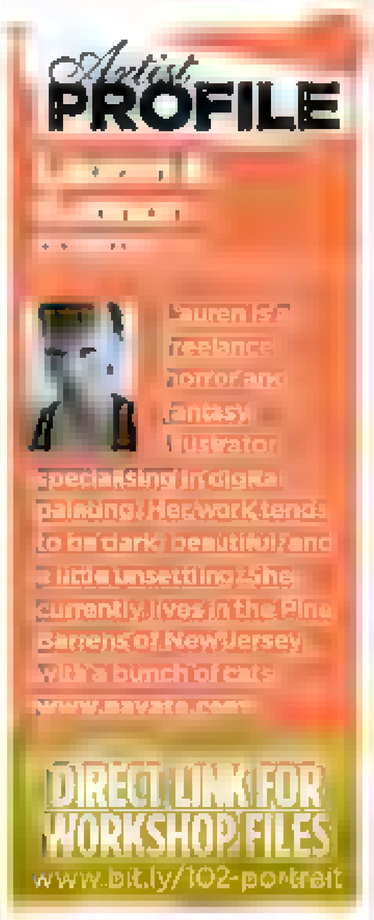
Step outside the box, use unusual colour and compositional choices, and produce an unusual horror portrait. Lauren K Carmilla leads the way

Character portraits are the favourite subject of many painters, but they run the risk of becoming boring. It seems there are only so many ways to paint a simple headshot. This workshop will demonstrate how stepping outside the box of what's expected in a portrait can radically change the result, making even a simple image engaging and unique.

I try to challenge myself with a portrait of the vampire Carmilla, the titular character from the 1872 novella. Carmilla is a classic gothic Victorian figure, and it's tempting to go for all the obvious vampire tropes: red, black, dramatic lighting, opulent details ... the works. Instead, I choose to use a limited colour palette based around unusual and decidedly un-gothic colours: peach, pink and beige. I keep the contrast and light soft, details minimal, and swear off any obvious visual clues such as blood or fangs.

I also want to experiment with obscuring parts of her face. This is always a good grab for a portrait: anything blocking part of the image's main focus will instantly create drama and mystery. This goes double if the object isn't something expected, such as a hood or veil. The bats create motion and depth in the image, in addition to partially blocking Carmilla's face.

This image is mostly painted in Photoshop, with some Painter thrown in at the end. Before beginning I research bat species and Victorian photographs. The photographs also serves as an inspiration for Carmilla's front-facing, blank expression – hopefully another contrast to the expected body language of a seductive vampiress.



1 The first sketch

This is the initial doodle I create after I have the idea to do a portrait with lots of bats and a limited colour scheme. It's essentially a thumbnail sketch – extremely basic and sloppy, just to get my idea into the computer to hopefully mold into something worthwhile. The overall theme of the colours is peaches and cream – as odd as that sounds for a vampire portrait. I scribble the bats on a different layer.



2 Cleaning up the face

In between these two stages I do a lot of thinking and plenty of research. I look up different bat species, hoping to find ones that are light coloured (turns out there are some; the Pallid bat) and also research Victorian-era hairstyles and clothing. Keeping my palette limited, I hide the top bat layer and rework her face. I give her a Victorian up-do and clean up her face enough to establish the kind of light that I'm after.

3 Composing the bats

Balancing a lot of similar objects in a composition is harder than it seems. It's important to think about size relation and avoid repetition. Sizes should vary, distance between the objects shouldn't be uniform, things should fall beyond the edge of the canvas and overlap in places to make the placement seem less "planned". Layers are key for this kind of planning; they enable me to experiment with different shapes on the fly.



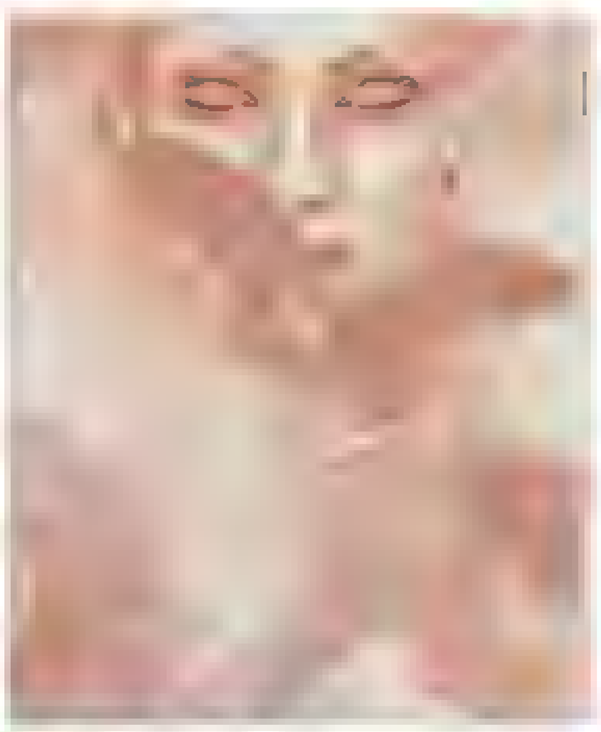


4 Orchestrating the cover-up

Once I settle on a composition for the bats, I create a new layer on which I begin blocking in the bats with correct colour and anatomy. My primary focus is to be mindful of how the edges and silhouettes of the bats interact with the rest of the image. The big bat in the centre needs to overlap Carmilla's mouth and cheek in a way that's visually interesting, rather than distracting.

5 A noble visage

With the main bats in place, I refine Carmilla's face. It's important to know how and where her face would be obscured before I make important decisions on exactly how she looks. I keep her skin pale and low contrast, adding a touch of darker contrast around the eyes to bring them into focus. I routine flip the layer group of bats on and off to check that everything works together





6 Create overlapped objects

Some of the best compositional advice I can give is to never underestimate the power of an overlapping object. It instantly creates a natural feeling of depth. Even in portraits, overlap elements whenever possible. So for example, make hair go partially in front of the ear, or have a bit of cloth fall in front of or behind a limb. In this case I have a big ol' wing cutting through one of the main bats.

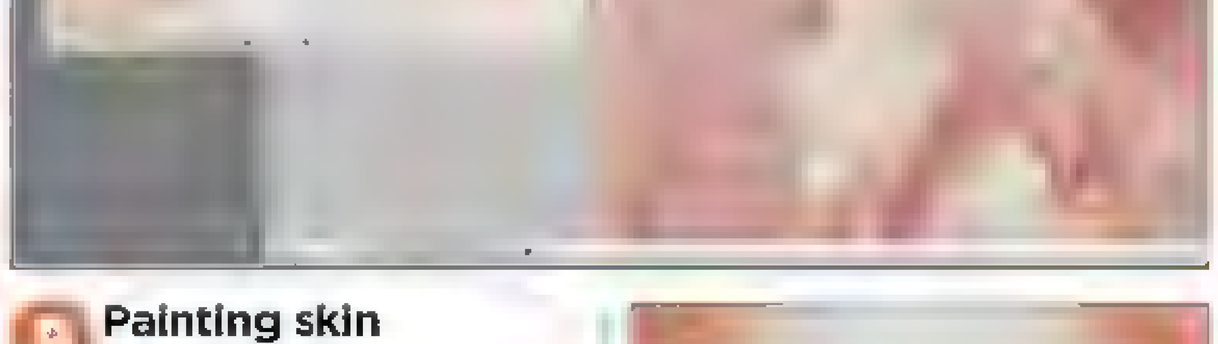


7 Fill in those gaps

The final part of balancing a composition like this is addressing negative space. The portrait works fine as it is, but I want there to be a swarm of bats around her so I add in several smaller bats. Again, I choose to overlap or obscure several of them, while others are cropped or flying off the canvas. I'm mindful to not space the bats out too rigidly, instead risking some areas to seem a little cluttered

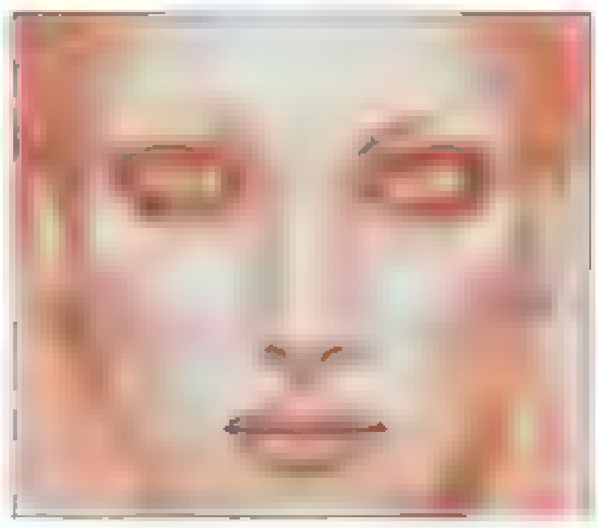
8 Enhancing the palette

At this point it's time to expand my palette a little. In a new 500x500 pixel canvas, I use the Color Picker tool to select the beige and pink tones already present in the painting. From there I introduce other related colours, giving my palette choice more richness while keeping the colour range small. Variations of the yellows, oranges and the pinks, some lavender, and a cool blue-green highlight colour provide temperature and hue variation to keep things exciting



9 Painting skin

I blend the skin using a spackled brush made up of several dots and dashes. Low opacity gives me a smooth, even blend. Colours are limited to the palette I've just created. A touch of pink is added to the lips, cheeks and nostrils for subtle warmth, the blueish highlight colour creates an excellent soft and rich contrast to the yellow tones in the shadows of the forehead. All the most saturated colours are concentrated around the eyes.



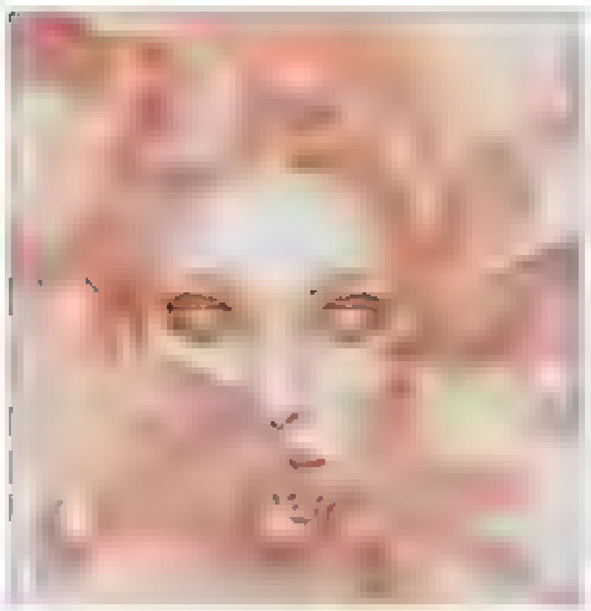


10 Detailing the bats

While Carmilla's face is the focus of the painting, it's also fairly simple-looking. There isn't much detail happening except in her eyes. This makes it extra important that I don't get lazy with the bats nearest her head. I go in with a small Round brush and start to refine the forms of each bat, adding colour variation and textural details with simple brush marks. The idea is to suggest a lot of detail without over-rendering and making things look stiff.

Making my limited colours pop

Once the bats are detailed, I continue to push their colours to try and separate them a little more from Carmilla. For this I refer back to my colour palette, pulling from the purples to enhance shadows, from hot salmon pinks and oranges to give the bat wings a sense of translucency, and from the pale blue highlight colour I'd initially chosen for the skin. This works well to brighten the lightest parts of the bats' fur and wings, giving them excellent dimension.







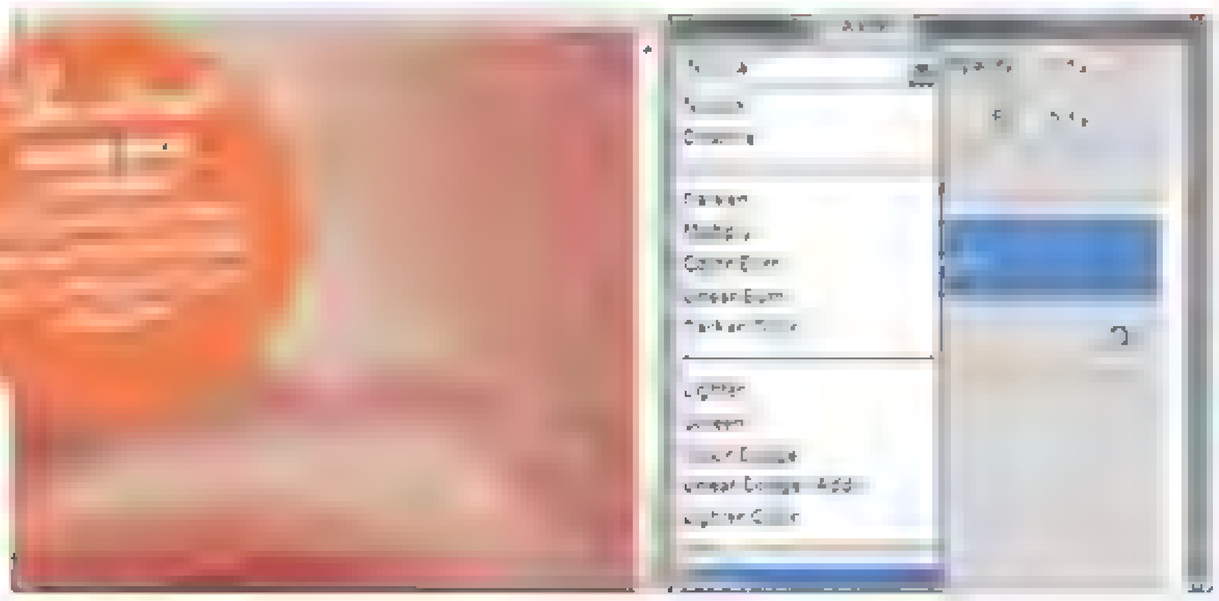
And into Painter...

At this point, I bring the image into Corel Painter for final rendering. I find that Painter gives my work a much more organic, textured feel than straight Photoshop. I use the Oils Smeary Bristle Spray as my go-to blending brush for skin and hair, and the Oil Pastels for more detailed work. These both give my Photoshop renderings a much more lush feel. Shadow and highlights are enhanced with Pastel brushes.

Finishing off the bats

I use the same technique in Painter on the bats, this time using the Smeary Bristle oil bush to give the bats a more painterly, rough style. The same brush is also great for creating soft, blurry edges that still maintain texture – exactly what I want to achieve in this image in terms of playing with focus.





Make use of Overlay layer mode

I bring the image back into Photoshop and create a fresh layer set to Overlay mode. Painting into this layer brings out the chroma of the underlying colour without damaging any of the detail. It helps me fine-tune the image's colour scheme so that the values and contrast read clearly, and the colours are still limited but not muddy or sallow. In particular, I bump up the hues of the shadows.

Creating motion blur

I want the edges of the image to be indistinct and soft, including the bats, but I don't want to create a straightforward vignette effect. Instead, I merge the entire image and then duplicate it. I use the Lasso tool with a feather setting of around 30 pixels to select parts of the bats on the duplicated layer and apply a Motion blur individually. This enables me to keep the direction of the blur unique to each bat.







Finishing touches

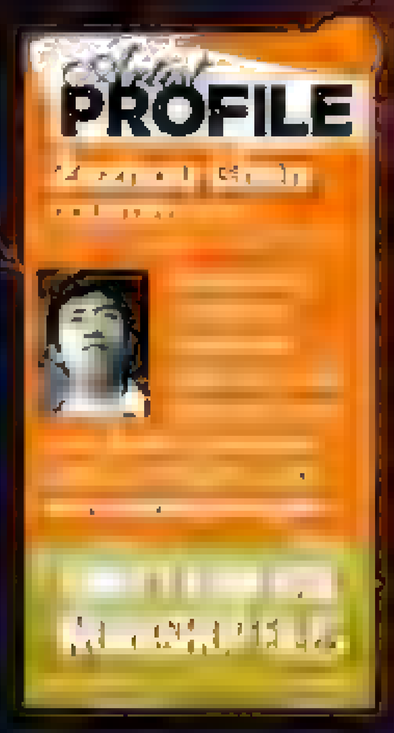
Because I only applied blurs to the top layer, I can use the Eraser to refine or tone down blurred areas that I'm unhappy with, by erasing so the original layer shows through. This enables me to keep edges and textures. Never let a filter do all the work, even if it's something basic like a blur. A hands-on touch will always bring better results. With one last tweak of the colours, Carmilla is complete.

Photoshop

PAINT A STAR PRINCESS

Zezhou Chen reveals how he gives his celestial figure the romance and magic she deserves





The concept of a star princess has been in my mind for a long time. I tried to paint it 14 months ago, but I wasn't satisfied with the result. Initially, I was attempting to create a goddess with a sci-fi background. Not like Athene, Valkyrie or any of those ancient gods, but a god who lives in the future, or maybe even in the present. It's an attractive idea and back then it felt like a big challenge.

After such a long time thinking about this concept, I now have some very specific ideas for the image. There are two words to describe what I want to achieve: romantic and mysterious. I also want to make a comment on humanity and its reliance on technology – or its ever-deepening, almost symbiotic, relationship with it.



A soft touch

I usually soothe this kind of ribbon in Chinese script.

The value of workshop notes

I usually create between 50 and 100 WIPs per image. I save these steps because it helps me to gain a clearer understanding of my direction. Every time I make a change, I'll compare the altered version with the previous one. If I accept the change, it's great. And if not, I'll step back from this process and try for another variant by repeating this process. I constantly improve my art.



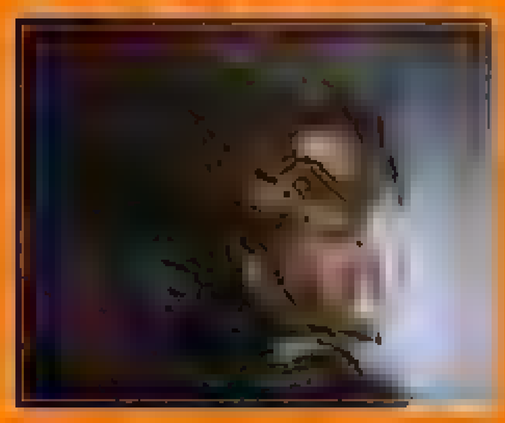
Adjusting brightness and contrast

There are many ways in Photoshop to control the brightness and contrast. But most of the time I still need to adjust this by hand. I usually create a new layer and set it to Overlay. I paint it with white to make the image brighter, and black to make it darker.

scene's brightness and hue later on by using the Hue/Saturation adjustment too.

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A ROYAL SPACE WARRIOR



1 Push the concept

I start rendering her face because it's the focal point of the image. The most important job here is to turn the vague concept into a reliable description. I don't care about how the armour is made or what it's made of at this stage, I just want to get the shapes and the volumes right. I choose a standard Photoshop brush for this part, because it provides a solid feel and it's easy to control.



2 Quick reflections

I use a stock image of stars on the armour, I cut and transform the image by following the undulation of its form – just like putting up a texture on a 3D model. Then I adjust its colour and make it more like gold. All this is the basis for further progression. It gives me a general vision of what I'm doing. Then I paint over it and clarify the details. I'm not trying to make it super realistic. Simulating the reality is enough for me.



3 Adding dust

I introduce some effects of nebula and dust in the foreground. Then I only need to bring the shadow parts to life and sense that there is still some stock images of the cosmos and set the layer mode of the image to Lighten. By doing this, only the brighter parts of the stock image will show, which would be the stars. Then I use the Curves tool to adjust the bright area until I'm happy with the result.

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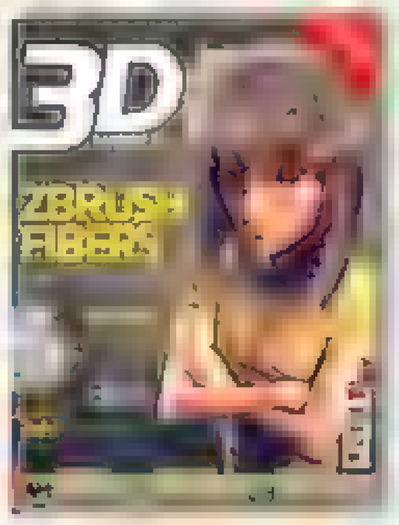
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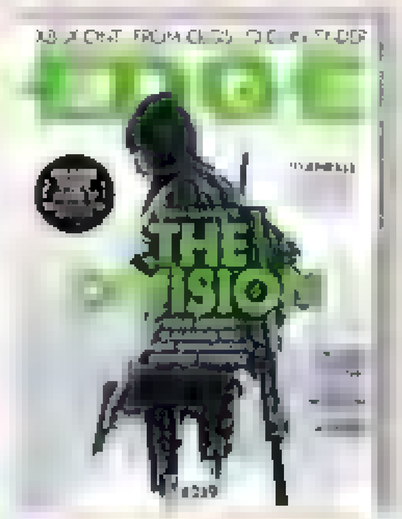
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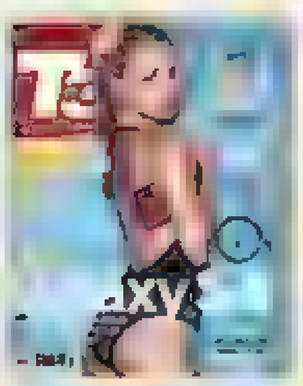
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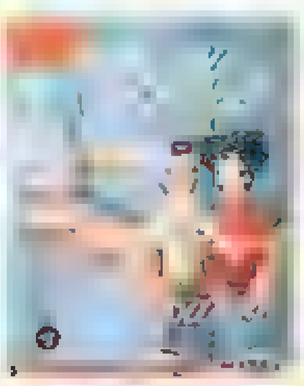
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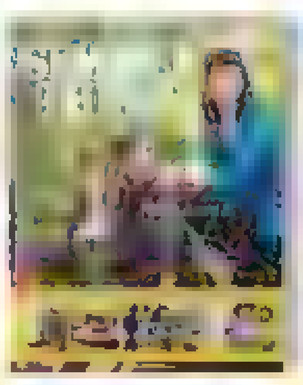
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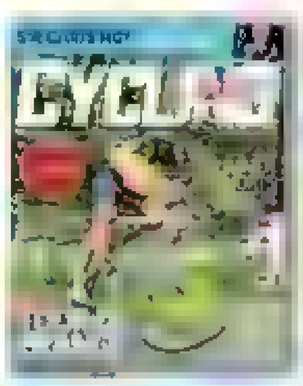
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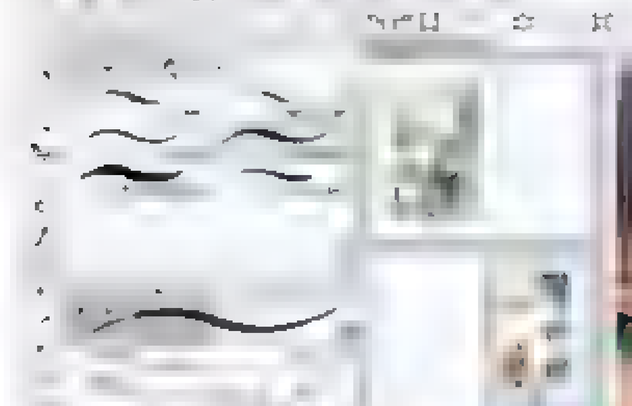
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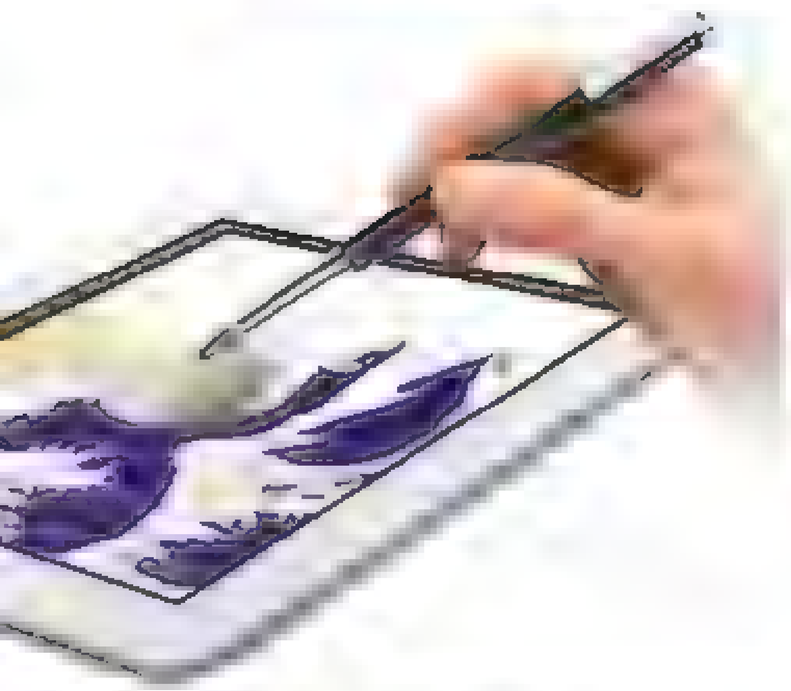


Artist's Choice Award
Software and hardware with a five-star rating receives the 'FX Artist's Choice award'

The latest digital art resources are put to the test by the ImagineFX team...







SOFTWARE & HARDWARE

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We check out the premium version of the painting and comic creation software, and consider whether it's worth the hefty price hike.

91 Autodesk Rentals
Will Autodesk encounter the same pitfalls and public backlash that Adobe did, as it makes its way down the software rental path?

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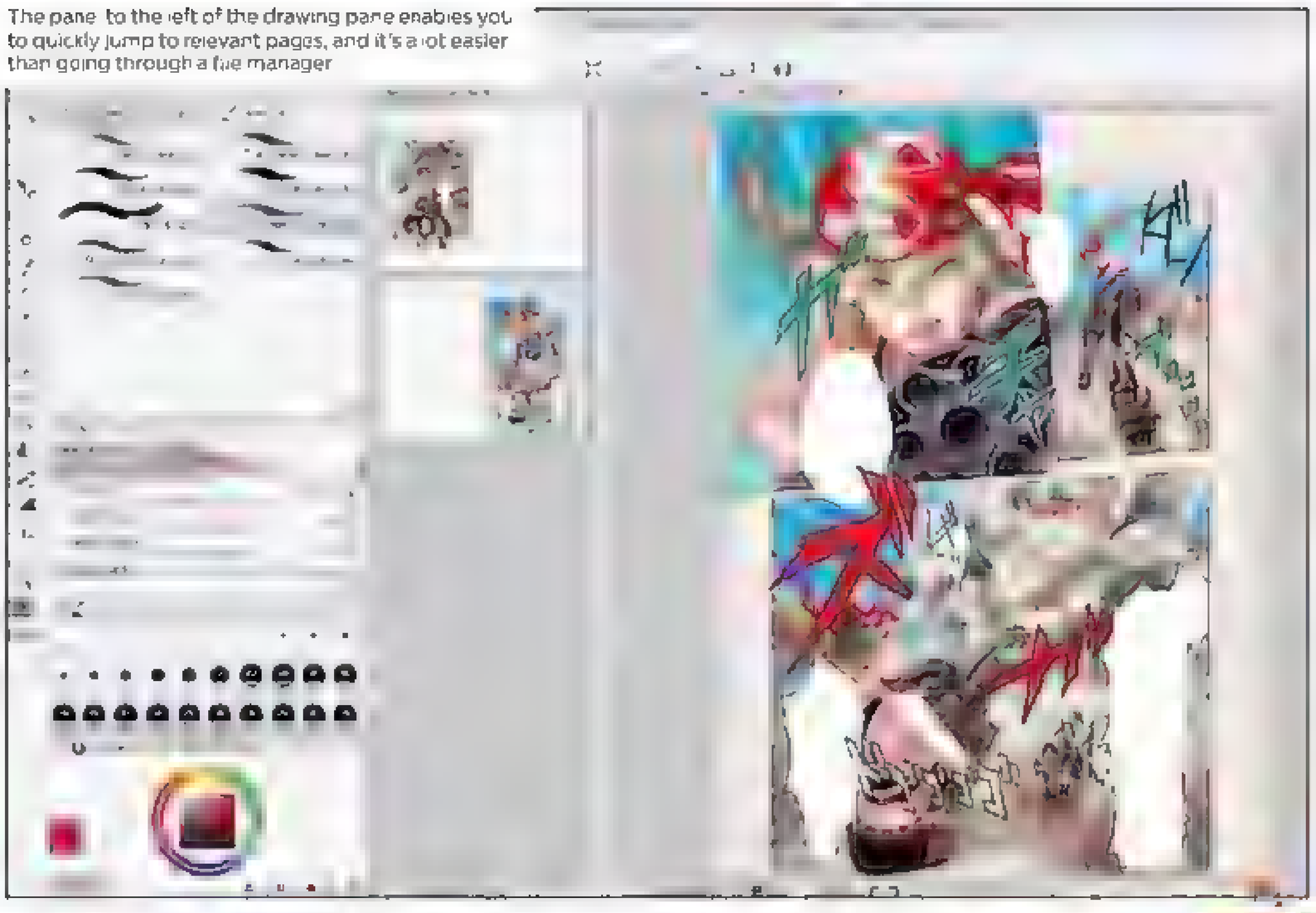


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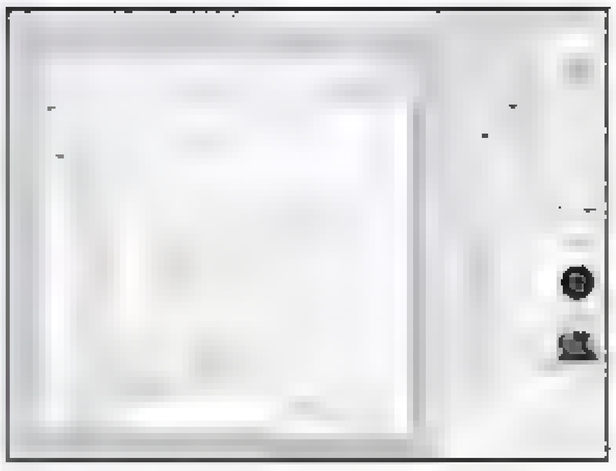
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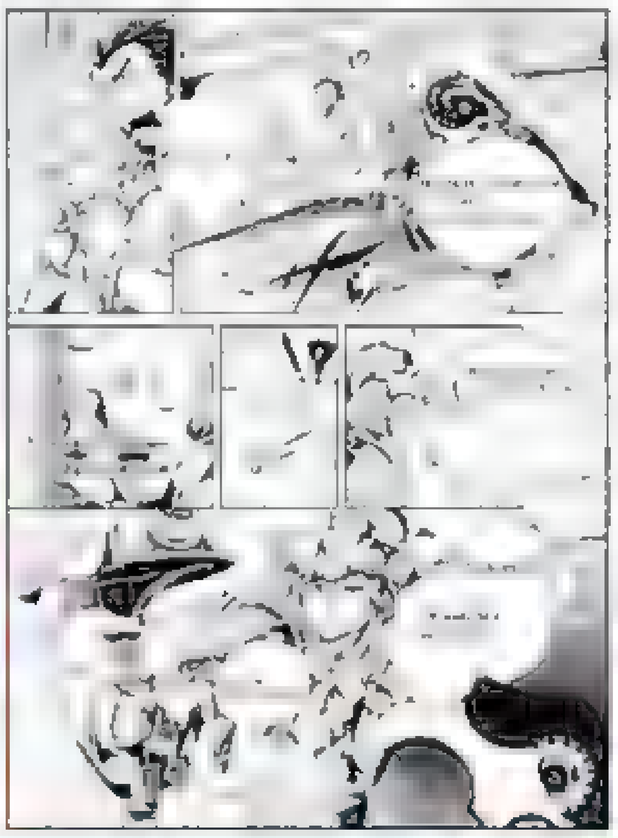
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The panel to the left of the drawing pane enables you to quickly jump to relevant pages, and it's a lot easier than going through a file manager



A 32-page comic book just begging to be filled with your wonderful stories and characters



Manga Studio 5 EX

STUDIO LINE The comic creation program finally gets a premium version. But are the enhanced features worth the hefty price hike?

Price $300 **Company** **Web** **Contact**

Earlier this year we reviewed Smith Micro's Manga Studio 5, a comprehensive update to one of the best pieces of art software we've seen. It's a versatile program, adopted by comic artists and digital painters alike. Manga Studio 5 EX is the higher-end, professional version, adding $220 to Manga Studio 4's incredibly reasonable $80 price tag.

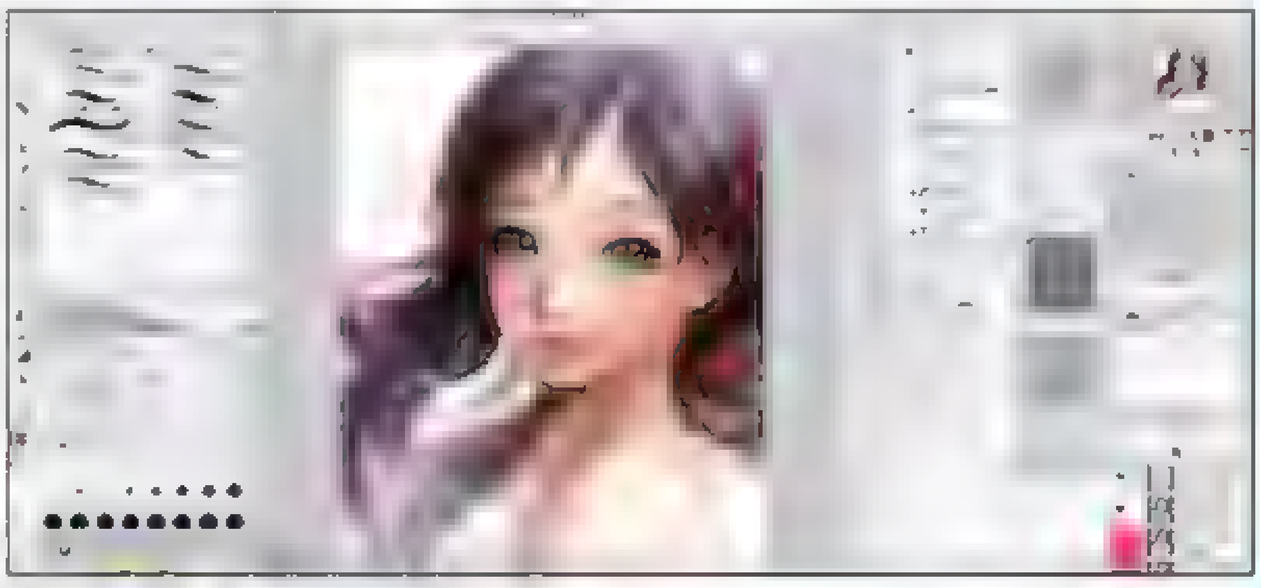
The core tools that made Manga Studio 5 such a tempting prospect for digital artists of any medium are all here. Word balloon layers, perspective lines and poseable characters all make it a joy to use, and deliver impressive results without too many headaches. You can also export your images to PSD format, enabling you to make further adjustments in Photoshop.

5 EX adds a bunch of features for people who are using the software to create multi-page narrative comics rather than single pieces of artwork. Open a new project and you're given the ability to add pages, complete with numbering and titles in the footer. You can see an overview of your comic and quickly jump to relevant pages.

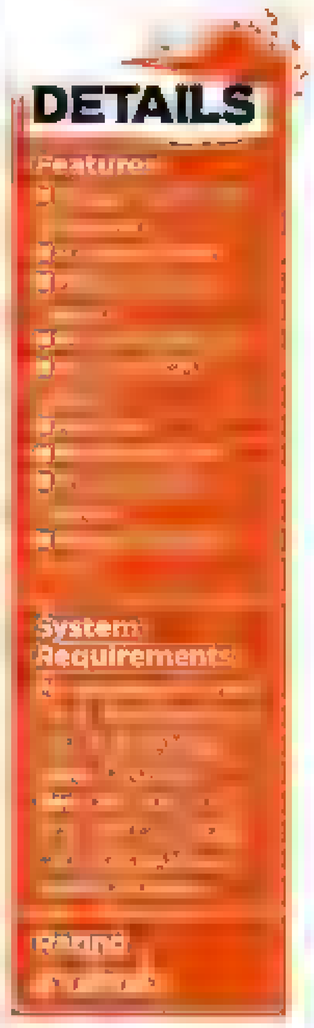
Once you've completed your comics, you can batch export it or print it rather than going through one page at a time. You can apply processes such as new layers and blurs to the entire comic, which is handy if you want to make last-minute changes. Page flow can be adjusted so that it reads from right to left, for the ultimate Japanese-style manga experience.

None of the features actually add to the creative experience of Manga Studio 5 – they're more management and publishing tools. But that's not to say that they're not useful – creating a multi-page comic in Manga Studio 5 is possible, but also a huge faff.

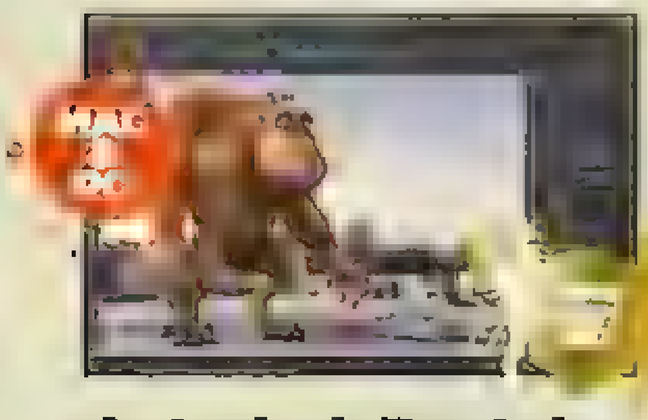
The question as to why Smith Micro has chosen to add such a massive mark-up for so few extra features remains, but to us it makes sense. Manga Studio 5 is a brilliant entry point to digital art, and the fact that 5 EX exists actually adds value to the basic package. If you're creating multi-page comics then (you'd hope) you've already struck some kind of deal to get your work published, and therefore it's not unreasonable to assume that you can afford the extra mark-up. But if you're not lucky enough to have signed a six-figure deal for your comics and simply want to create art we'd recommend sticking with Manga Studio 5, and then upgrading to 5 EX when the publishers come a-knockin'.



The premium version of Manga Studio 5 now gives you everything you need to create an entire comic



Renting packages like Maya for short spe is wi give everybody the chance to learn new skills



Autodesk Rentals

RENT STRIKE The next down the controversial path to software rentals

Price £45 month (Maya LT)
Company Autodesk
Web www.autodesk.co.uk
RATING

Adobe's decision to go subscription-only with its creative software earlier this year was met with fear, uncertainty and doubt. Naturally, people didn't like being forced to merely rent their software when they could have bought it outright. So it feels odd that Autodesk is following a similar route with its popular 3ds Max and Maya software.

Thankfully, it's not going the whole hog, and will continue to make traditional software purchases possible on top of its rental plans. This means the software is far cheaper than it normally would be. Buying 3ds Max outright would traditionally set you back £3,300, but you can rent it for just £205 a month. Quarterly and annual rental plans offer more savings on top.

Autodesk is keen to point out how useful this is to special effects and design companies that scale up and down depending on their workload, but it's equally useful for amateurs who wish to dabble in the world of 3D creation and animation. Yes, it's pricey but it's a lot cheaper than buying the software outright – and Autodesk also offers free software for students.



Fancy a stab at 3D character creation yourself? Now you can – but for a whole lot less

Poser 10

MODEL BEHAVIOUR The mannequin manipulation software adds a whole whack of features and becomes an art program in its own right

Price Company Web Contact

An inevitable part of getting to grips with Poser's character animation software is torturing the poor default model. You knot his neck up, turn his head inside out and arrange his limbs in a fashion that could only be achieved in reality with a few broken bones. It's all part of the learning curve, and a great way to find out the limits of the titular act of manipulating the human form.

While 2D artists looking for a permanently available model might not venture further than the initial figurine, 3D artists and animators can delve into the deeper aspects and create characters and even short films of their own. Characters can be customised with adjustable proportions or hand-made textures, and animation cycles – such as day-to-day stuff like walking and talking – are easy to create.

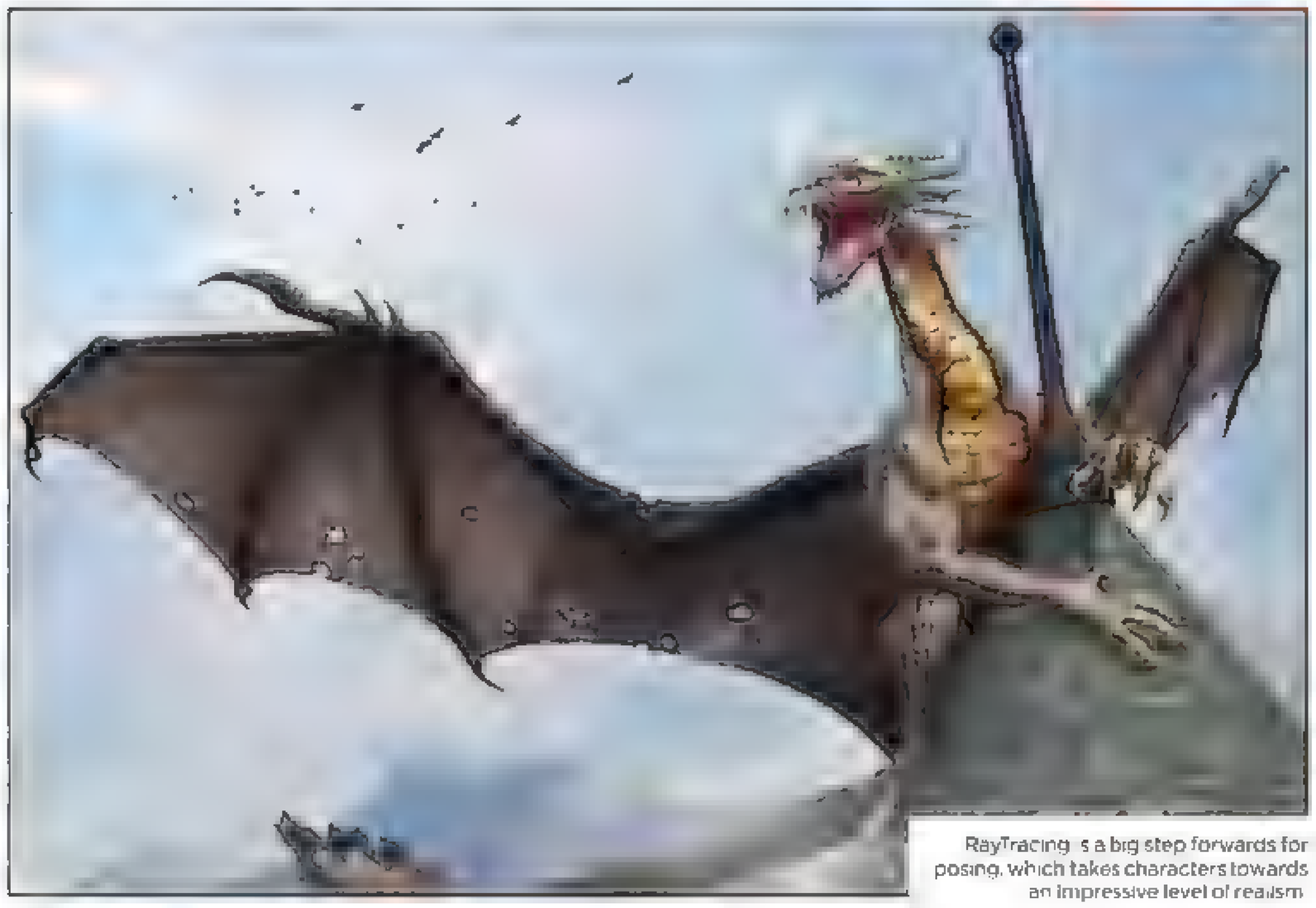
Poser 10 doesn't add a whole load of new or exciting features over Poser 9, but there are some subtle technical improvements that bring it more in line with its polished competitors, namely 3ds Max and Maya. Among these are subdivision surfaces for smoother renders. Bullet Physics and soft body dynamics for better animation of hair and globular objects, and a comic book mode that renders everything as if it were from the pages of a black-and-white graphic novel.

In addition to Poser 10, Poser Pro 2014 is also now available. On top of 10's new features, the Pro software package includes an interactive fitting room, the ability to copy morphs from figure to figure, and parameter controls for more precise customisation. The Pro version costs $200 more than the standard version, and it's only really worth the extra investment if you want your characters to have that little bit little extra sheen and realism. For everyone else, Poser's still the single best piece of software for character modelling and animation.



Subdivisions work out curved areas and add more polygons, so that they appear more natural.

DETAILS



RayTracing is a big step forwards for posing, which takes characters towards an impressive level of realism

The TruGlide Pro is sleeker and nicer to use than the usual rubber-tipped stylus models, but is it any better than using the tip of your finger to create your art?



TruGlide Pro Precision Stylus

PEN TOOL This new addition to the digital artist's stylus quiver boasts a microfibre tip. We find out if it really makes a difference

Price $30 **Company** Lynktec **Web** **Contact**

Styluses have become essential parts of any tablet-based digital artist's toolkit, and using a refined, pen-like object makes creating art a lot easier than prodding a chubby finger. But they're also a licence to print money: get a tube, whack a capacitive rubber tip on the end and you can charge £10 for it under the guise of it being arty.

Instead of rubber, Lynktec uses microfibre for its tip. It looks a little odd, like someone's stuck a tiny ball of metallic wool on the end of a normal pen, but it works extremely well. It glides across tablet and smartphone screens with none of the sticky judders of a rubber tip. The experience is more akin to writing on a shiny surface with a dry-wipe marker than a pen on paper, but you get used to it quickly.

An additional, brush-like tip made from the same microfibre is available for $15. While it could be sensational for digital artists, it's a less-satisfying experience because the screen picks it up as if it were a fingertip or stylus, with nowhere near the precision or control you'd have from a real brush. If someone invented a screen capable of picking up every individual fibre it would be marvellous, but this is unlikely, given the majority's preference for using their digits on smart devices.

The microfibre tip, however, is a revelation, and well worth picking up if you want to have a little more control and style over your artistic creations. It's well-balanced, precise, and it feels as though it will last a lot longer than the rapidly disintegrating cheapo rubber styluses currently cluttering the ImagineFX office pen mug.

DETAILS

A good-looking and hard-wearing bag, but not great for lumping around on a pushbike...



Mamba Courier 11

GOODIE BAG Got a MacBook Air? Got a shoulder? You're in luck...

Price £73
Company Booq
Web www.booqbags.co.uk
Rating

Booq's Mamba Courier over-the-shoulder bag is designed with the MacBook Air 11 in mind, and it feels tough and rugged. The natural fibre material is thick, like coarse denim, and it's padded throughout so your precious technology won't get damaged should it have an unfortunate encounter with gravity. Booq boasts that the material is waterproof, too, so we took it out in the worst of British weather and it stood true to this claim.

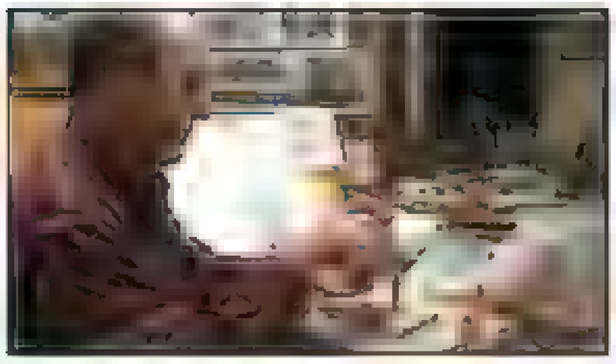
In addition to the main hold, there are sleeves at the front and back for documents, and a pen-holder within. It's not as compartmentalised as Booq's Mamba Shift backpack, and while it'll hold a D-SLR this might distort other areas of the bag.

We do take issue with its Courier branding, though. While it's suggestive of a bike-riding artist supping a latte and quickly delivering their latest work to a publisher on the fly, it proved immensely cumbersome when we took it for a ride, and kept riding around to our armpit like a drunken, rectangular koala. If you travel only by foot and want a hard-wearing but smart satchel for carrying your MacBook and maybe your iPad around in, it's pretty much perfect, though.



You can fit an incredible amount of kit into the Courier 11 – and pretty safely too



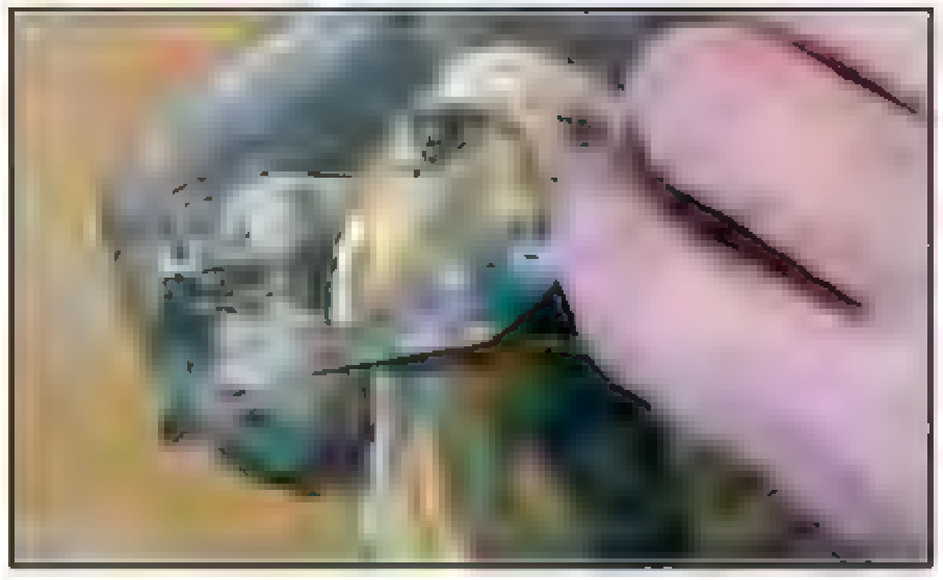


How I Paint Dinosaurs reveals James Gurney's full working process as he creates two dinosaur-based pieces for Scientific American



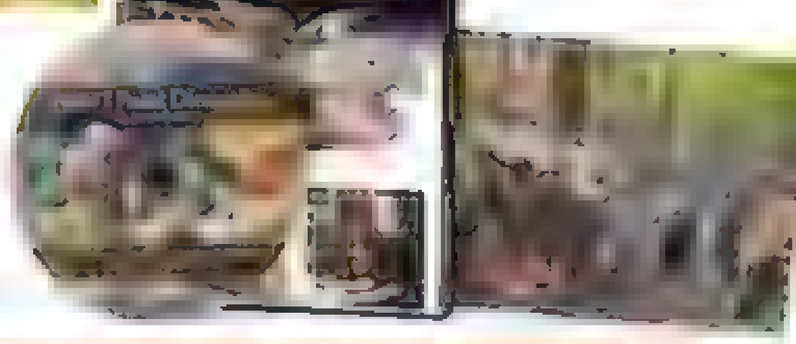


James's meticulous techniques will inspire you by showing ways to make your fantasy art feel more realistic









How I Paint Dinosaurs

MASTER AT WORK Be inspired as illustration master James Gurney shares his painting techniques, backed up with obsessive research

Publisher: **Price:** **Web:**

The generosity so many leading fantasy artists show in sharing their techniques is one of the most gratifying rewards of being part of this great community. James Gurney is a shining example, using books, blog posts and YouTube to demonstrate his working methods, so the prospect of a long-form video from him is a welcome one.

How I Paint Dinosaurs focuses on the technical side of his illustration work in favour of his Dinotopia franchise, as he films the making of two dinosaur paintings for the eminent magazine Scientific American. The brief demands that James's creative decisions, from the environment to the creatures' anatomy and poses, are consistent with the latest research which is a worthwhile benchmark for anyone depicting the fantastic.

The presentation takes its cues more from a TV documentary rather than conventional training videos, with high-quality filming and editing. James presents his workflow for each piece from creating thumbnails and building wire and clay maquettes, to building up the painting. Despite essentially going through the same workflow twice, he avoids repetition by lingering on different stages, so that the second run-through informs the first.

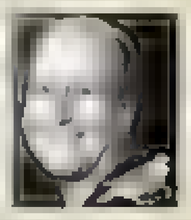
You wouldn't expect a relatively brief presentation of an entire workflow to offer exceptional depth, and many of James's techniques will be familiar to anyone who's followed him online or in print. The real value of this video is the sense of inspiration you'll end up with, after seeing the meticulous lengths James takes to ensure his paintings have a rock-solid foundation of observation.

How I Paint Dinosaurs is over too soon, you'll wish it was double the length. Given the price difference between the two available formats, the $15 high-definition download is a bargain, the $32 DVD is a treat.

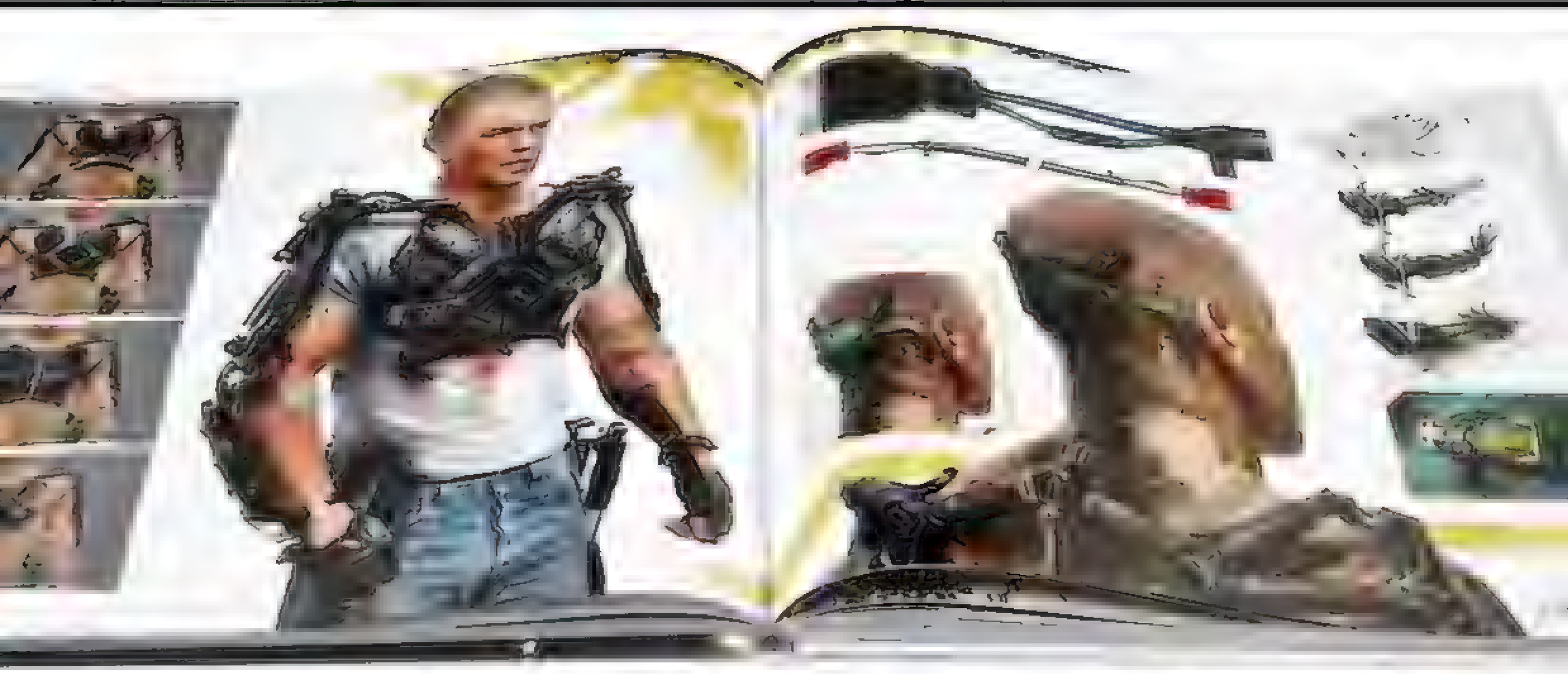


JAMES GURNEY

James is best known for his book series Dinotopia. He specialises in painting realistic images of scenes that can't be photographed, from dinosaurs to ancient civilisations. James taught himself to draw by reading books about Norman Rockwell and Howard Pyle. He received a degree in anthropology at the University of California at Berkeley, but chose a career in art. As well as the Dinotopia series, James has written the instruction books Imaginative Realism and Color and Light.



www.gurneyjourney.blogspot.com



Elysium: The Art of the Film

PARADISE LOST How Neill Blomkamp and Syd Mead worked together to create a vision of a terrible, wonderful future

Author	Publisher	Price	Web	Available

Set in 2059, Neill Blomkamp's Elysium depicts a version of LA in which the rich have left for the titular space colony, leaving the city to become akin to a South American slum. The key to uniting the two worlds is Max (Matt Damon), a working class hero whose mission to save his own life takes him from dystopia to utopia. This making-of book deals with Max's journey, from his humble beginnings to his role as saviour of mankind.

If you've seen District 9 – Neill's debut – you'll know what to expect from the film's Earthbound first-half dusty rundown fave as riddled with crime. The filmmakers were keen to make the most of real-world locales with a CGI-extended Mexico standing in for the wrecked version of LA. To populate the city, the design team created robots and vehicles which were added to the film as props for key scenes, and CGI for movement and wider shots.



Every single shot of the film was planned in minute detail

In stark contrast to this gritty interpretation of the future is Elysium itself. The space colony is aseptically clean and sterile, with gleaming white corridors and shiny surfaces. Again, Neill and his crew shot in real locations such as posh residencies in Mexico to stand in for Elysium's affluent abodes. The book's author points out that due to real-world photography atmospheric conditions had to be added to the CG version of Elysium so that duller shots matched up correctly.

Visual futurist Syd Mead (Blade Runner, TRON) was drafted in to give Elysium's corridors and control rooms a plausible sci-fi sheen, and Neill certainly found the 80-year-old designer a boon for the movie. The director also notes, interestingly, that, "I feel the way the artwork within the films is created is disposable. A lot of that's because in 1979 there was Syd Mead and Rob Cobb, and now there are probably 5-6,000 concept artists using Photoshop and banging out 300 images a day. With Syd he actually thinks about things."



Multiple vehicle paint schemes were produced to give the filmmakers plenty to choose from

The entire book is an amazing insight into the world of visual and special effects concepts, and it's impressive just how deep it goes. There are pages of tattoo designs for the various characters, logos for the robots and even a look inside Damon's head – literally. There's no denying that Neill Blomkamp has an incredible talent in keeping the extra-terrestrial down-to-earth, and it serves as a great inspiration for sci-fi art as well as a fascinating peek behind-the-scenes.



RATING ✍✍✍✍✍

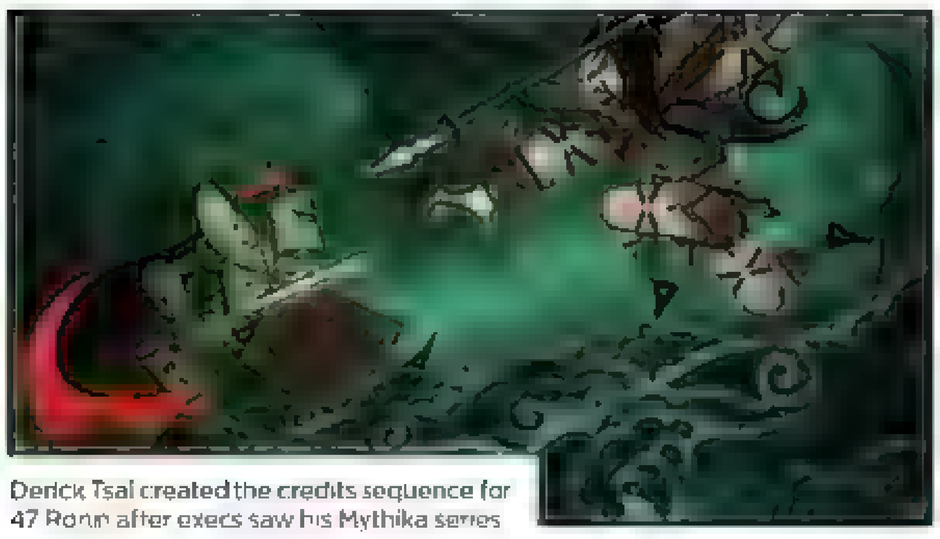
Re:Invent

MAGNUS OPUS The story of one of the world's most diverse studios – and one of its very special employees

Editor Derick Tsai **Publisher** Ma… **Price** … **Web** … **Available** …

It's not often that a studio-produced art book elicits a lump in our throats, but ImagineFX heroes Magnus Rex's Re:Invent has done just that. It began as a Kickstarter project to collate all the studio's output in a quality hardback, and the fact that it reached $10,000 more than its initial $7,500 goal shows that the studio has its fair share of enthusiastic fans.





Derick Tsai created the credits sequence for 47 Ronin after execs saw his Mythika series

The studio's founder Derick Tsai's beautiful Mythika series takes pride of place in the first chapter. It's incredible to witness on the printed page and the use of colour, patterns and semi-woodcut aesthetic is unlike anything we've seen before. It continues into Angela Zhu's watery, colourless creations, which are wonderful in their own right, and Stephen Chang's moody and evocative sci-fi portraits.

The whole thing takes a sad twist in its final chapter, in which the studio's Francis Tsai is diagnosed with ALS, an incurable disease that causes paralysis. However, Francis fought through the disease creating art with his toe on his iPad, and then switching to an eye-tracking devices. It's a tale of triumph in the face of adversity, and it lends a human perspective to what is already a stunning book.

RATING ✍✍✍✍✍

Mobile Digital Art: Using the iPad and iPhone as Creative Tools

SMARTPHONE ARTPHONE A guide to the ways that artists are embracing Apple's portable technology

Author … **Publisher** … **Price** … **Web** … **Available** …

Mobile devices have made significant inroads into the arena of conventional digital art. Mobile Digital Art is a natural publication, then, even if its presence on the ImagineFX bookcase feels a little asynchronous with its digital-based material.

The book features 70 tutorials from experts in the field, and covers landscapes, portraits and photographs.





Kyle Lambert proves that your iPhone can be used for more than playing Angry Birds

Some of the art is a little amateurish, but most stands out and thanks to the variety of apps available, some of it can be astonishing. Rita Flores' BatGirl looks like a piece of 1960s pop art, whereas Gabriel Palacios Badillo's The Death of a Dictator uses texture and colour to create a Byzantine painting.

It concludes with a gallery of more work by featured artists, which is testament to the diversity of iOS devices. It's a little too App-e-centric. Android devices are proving just as handy as tools for digital artists, and some of the images are blurry and pixelated thanks to the iPhone's small screen. But it's worth the investment if you've been tempted to use your iPad for digital art.

RATING ✍✍✍✍

Also look at...

Be inspired by the latest recommended fiction

The Third Kingdom

Author Terry Goodkind
Publisher Harper Voyager
Price £20 **Available** Now



Fantasy literature is suited to trilogies, but Terry Goodkind's The Sword of Truth series takes some beating. The Third Kingdom is the 15th book to revolve around sword-brandishing bandits and war wizards. Terry enables readers to enter without prior knowledge, and protagonists Richard Cypher and Kahlan Amnell are joined by Samantha, a healer just coming into her powers, giving another 'in' to the new reader.

Apocalypse Now Now

Author Charlie Human
Publisher Century **Price** £13
Available Now



Baxter Zevcenko is the 16-year-old kingpin of a porn ring operating out of his Cape Town high school. After his girlfriend disappears, he hires a boozehound bounty hunter to help save her from the clutches of the "Mountain Killer". Charlie Human's debut draws you into a world of monsters and parallel dimensions. While the writing is clunky in places, the dark humour and plot twists to carry the story through to its incendiary conclusion.

Children of Fire

Author Drew Karpyshyn
Publisher Del Rey **Price** £17
Available Now



Drew Karpyshyn is a former writer for BioWare of such superb games as Baldur's Gate and Mass Effect. Not that you'd know it from this, his first non-gaming novel. It's a disappointingly stereotypical high-fantasy affair in which four disparate children must unite to fight the forces of Chaos etc, etc. The prose is very much of the "Tell, don't show" variety, with surprisingly little subtlety and – given the author's background – dialogue that never really rings true. Inevitably, it's the first of a trilogy.





Your benevolent AI companion from Kabam's game Edgeworld, as painted by Xaria Ortiz



Den Yang created this pane to represent the "victory" Battle state for the Elf Faction in The Hobbit Kingdoms of Middle-earth

Kabam

[redacted] This San Francisco-based games company talks us though its evolution from Facebook to mobile titles

Surely the biggest misnomer of recent times is 'casual gaming'. Despite their user-friendly interfaces and relaxed interaction, so-called casual games have a lot going on behind the scenes, and high-quality, evocative artwork is one of the keys to success in a crowded market.

Kabam, formed in 2006, is one of the few studios to get it right from the get-go with its Facebook game Kingdoms of Camelot. Yet the company was unprepared for just how many people would establish their own virtual medieval kingdoms.

"Kingdoms of Camelot's art was created by a small in-house art team," says Michael Dashow, Kabam's senior art director. "The game proved to be incredibly popular and more games were planned with greater graphics. Kabam realised that it would need a larger internal art team to develop new IP for several new games. I was brought in to grow the art team."



A 22-year veteran of the games industry, Michael brought his experience of working on everything from children's series Living Books to Blizzard's Diablo games to the table. He's also an accomplished sci-fi and fantasy artist, and his illustrations have graced the pages of ImagineFX. His eye for talented artists has made Kabam a highly respected games studios, and a top choice for San Francisco-based talent.

"I've also spent a lot of time building teams, especially at the last two start-ups where I was art director," says Michael. "This breadth of experience was a huge help in hiring the art team at Kabam. We prioritised finding artists who were talented, collaborative and fun to work with. Today, years later, that's still how



"This image, by Mitchell Mohrhauser, was an idea for the loading screen of an unreleased game and helps with establishing the mood of the world," says Michael.



MITCHELL MOHRHAUSER

Kabam's senior concept artist shares his secrets of success



What does an artist need in their portfolio to get noticed at Kabam?
A firm understanding of the fundamentals of art is always a must, as with any studio. On top of that, having a great sense of illustration and creative concepts always gets noticed here. Showing a versatile range in subjects and even style is a huge plus.

What work are you most proud of so far and why?
I'm proud of the work we've done on my current unreleased project. I've been working on that game since day one and we've gone through a few visual iterations trying to nail down the style so that it works for us and the players, but it has turned out to be something that looks really fun to play and look at. It's one of the first 3D games that has been developed here, so there are always going to be a few bumps in the road.

How much freedom do you have when working on a project?
I get a decent amount of freedom on each project. The benefit of being a senior concept artist at Kabam is being one of the first ones to help build the visual style of the game and doing a lot of fun work.

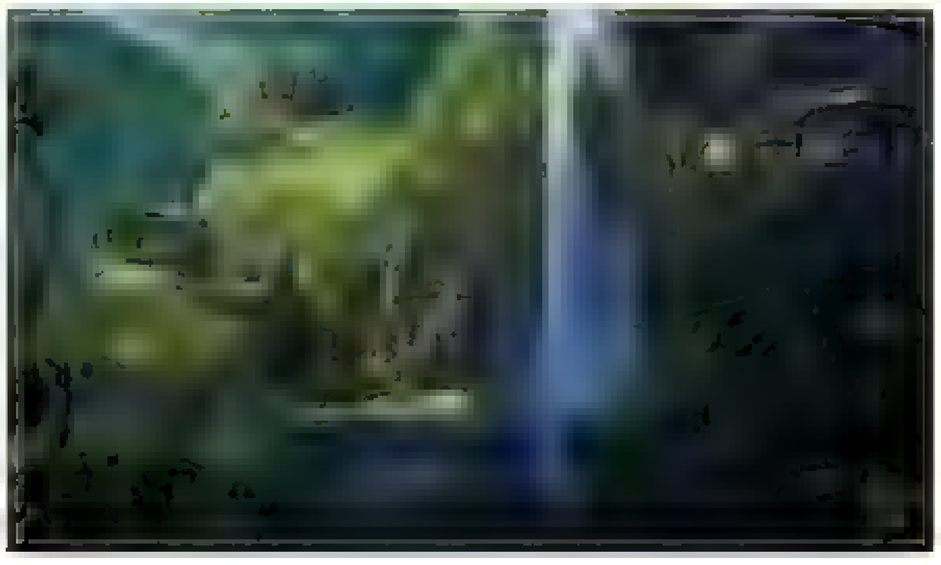
Why would you recommend working at Kabam?
It's one of the best studios I've worked at in the games industry, console studios included. The quality of the artists and the great people here make it an amazing place to work!

What advice do you have for someone wanting to be a concept artist?
Love what you do and do it constantly. Always be observant, take every opportunity to better your craft and never let up! I feel like those who never stop striving to learn are the ones who make it far in this industry.



Mitchell's been a part of the games industry since 2008. Before Kabam he worked on Eve Online and Dust 514.

www.kabam.com



Here's a background scene from Kingdoms of Camelot. The buildings were painted by Jordan Louie and Kristina Wayte, while Arie Alvarez tackled the environment.

would describe the (now much larger) team.

Kabam has since branched out into other in-house games and licensed tie-ins with The Hobbit and The Fast and the Furious. The nature of these free-to-play games means there's a lot of variety on offer for employees, and rather than concentrating all their efforts on one big-budget project, they're constantly updating smaller ones. It's an approach that works well and keeps the work fresh and interesting for artists.

Brian Matyas, the company's senior concept artist and cinematics illustrator, can vouch for the positive side of the mixed-up approach Kabam has to its work. "I'm on design, characters, environments and cinematics for their various titles. I'm currently working on an unreleased title and the biggest challenges



The Amazons in Dragons of Atlantis, as painted by Peter Mohrbacher, use magically infused weapons to fame massive dragons.

> **We have a drink-and-draw night where a bunch of artists head to a bar with their sketchbooks**

A concept for a new app icon by Wang Yimin for Kabam's hit mobile game Kingdoms of Camelot: Battle for the North.



finishing the cinematic by a very tight deadline," he says. "It's fun though."

As well as providing a fun and enjoyable environment for artists, Kabam nurtures new talent through training schemes and reimbursement for courses. "We have life drawing in the office every other week," says Michael. "We also have a drink-and-draw night where a bunch of artists head to a bar with their sketchbooks. That's a lot more informal."

Being based in San Francisco helps too. "Our offices are a couple of blocks from several art museums," says Michael. "And I've been to several Giants baseball games with co-workers because their stadium is in walking distance." Fitting really, seeing as the Kabam team is very good at hitting the ball out of the park with its high-quality art.

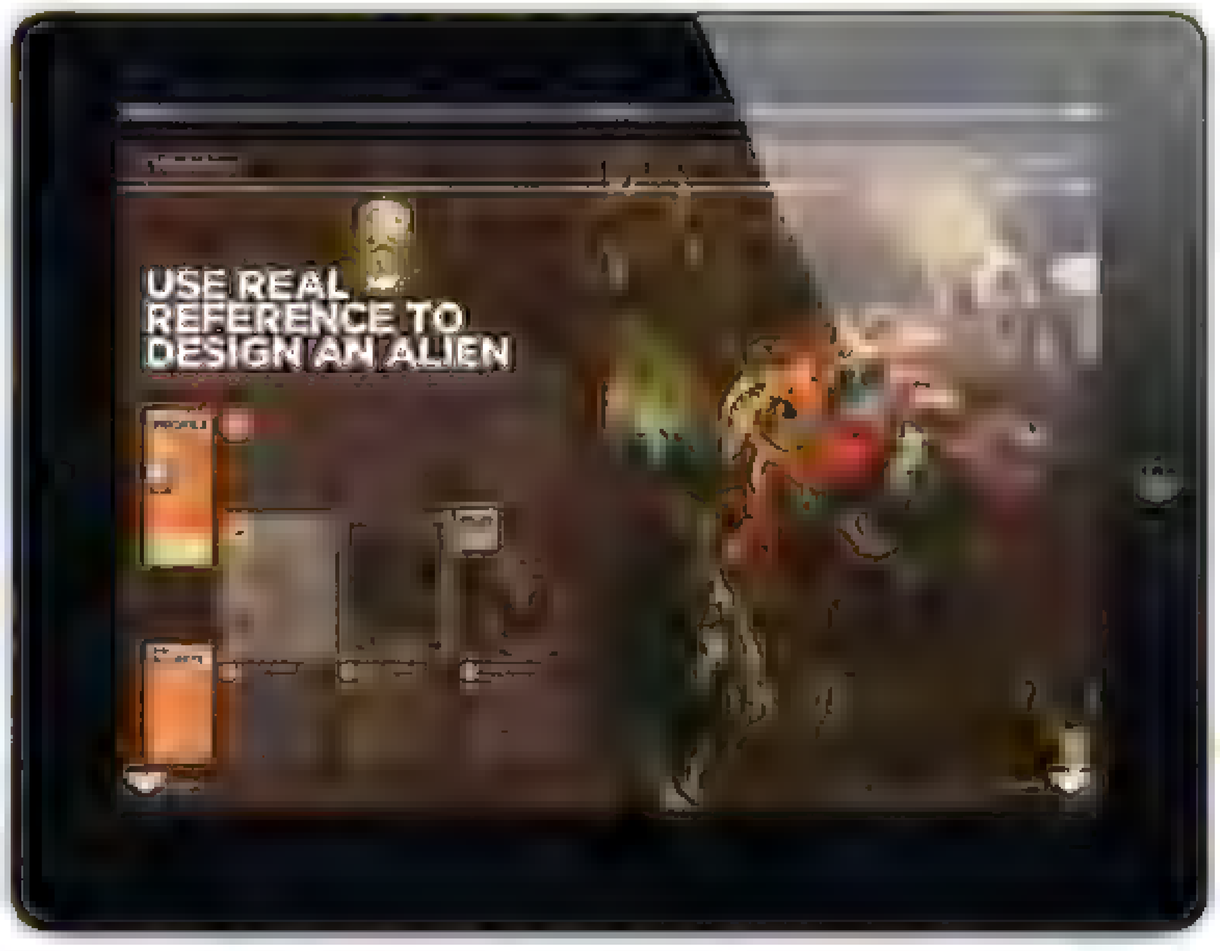
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Issue 96 June 2013



Immerse yourself in the world of classic fantasy art with the help of John Stanko, who channels the skills of Frazetta to produce this month's stunning cover. Our workshop artists will also help you depict moving fabric, paint a magical forest and give your digital paintings a traditional feel

Issue 97 July 2013



How could ImagineFX not celebrate the 50th anniversary of Marvel's X-Men or 75 years of DC's Superman in this month's comic special issue? And with workshops on mood lighting in your comics, how to pose two heroes and beating creative block, you'll soon be a digital art superhero!

Issue 98 August 2013



Be inspired by Simon Dominic's monstrously good cover art, then discover how paleoart has evolved over the years, as we talk to the artists who paint dinosaurs as realistically as possible. Workshops from Katie De Sousa and Weta's Christian Pearce also riff on the Lost World theme!

Issue 99 September 2013



To celebrate Magic: The Gathering's 20th birthday, we talk to some amazing card artists, such as Jason Chan, Scott M Fisher and John Stanko, while workshop artists include Aleksi Briclot and Volkan Baga. Elsewhere, Sparth 'sculpts' a sci-fi vista and Dave Rapoza paints a dark, brooding scene

Issue 100 October 2013



Our bumper 100th anniversary issue looks back to our past, and casts an eye over the artists of the future. There's a countdown of your 100 greatest artists of all time, a review of your favourite covers, plus workshops from Jason Chan, Raymond Swanland and the mighty Genzoman

Issue 101 November 2013



Let our sci-fi artists take you to strange, new worlds: John Berkey, Peter Elson and Chris Moore visit a galaxy called 'Inspirational'. Our workshop section includes art from Keith Thompson, Emma Vieceli and Thom Tenery, and we chat to the artists of Imaginary Friends Studios

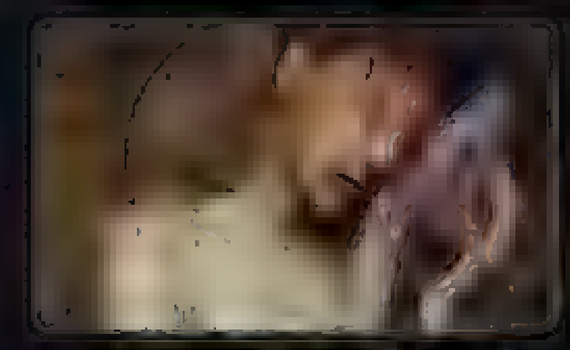
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ImagineFX PRESENTS

FANTASY illustrator

NEW SECTION

This issue:



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The best traditional art revealed.



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Explore Ron Lemen's art school.



106 Paint an Eerie cover
Jim Pavelec tackles horror art.



112 Anatomy advice
Observational tips for portraits.



114 First Impressions
We chat to Michael Whelan.

Storemags.com

FXPosé Traditional

SHOWCASING THE FINEST TRADITIONAL FANTASY ARTISTS

Samuel Araya
Paraguay
www.paintagram.blogspot.com
paintagram@gmail.com
Watercolours and gouache



Samuel lives in the city of Asuncion, but his location hasn't limited his client roster. He's created work for the Seattle Opera House, Centipede Press, White Wolf publishing and British heavy metal band Cradle of Filth. Although defined as traditional, Samuel says he's not limited by media or methods. "I work with a mixture of photography, collage and traditional media," he says.

Samuel's commercial work has enabled him to grow as an independent artist. "I'm currently concentrating on my fine art career," he says. "My first solo show in the US opened in May at Krab Jab Studio in Seattle."

IMAGINEFX CRIT



"It's great to see the darker side to fantasy art being explored. The use of so many mediums could hinder certain artwork, but Samuel has brought out the best of each to create these brutal and distressed portraits."
Daniel Vincent, Art Editor



BANALITY
Mixed media 8.5x11.5in
"Destruction is an important part of the creative process. I enjoy the control of the digital tools, but I discovered that I must introduce some chaos into my work. This one was the first image I created with experimentation in mixed media. I coated a photographic print of my Photoshop collages with some layers of matte medium, and then it's ready to receive layers of transparent watercolours and gouache."

SAMAEL
Mixed media 10.4x6.5cm
"My fascination with the figure of the martyr is quite evident in my work. This particular image was conceived during the Easter celebration."

FXPosé submissions to: fxpose@imagnefx.com



FANTASY Illustration EXPosé Fanart

Eric Velhagen

US
www.bit.ly/ifx-evelhagen
eric@ericvelhagen.com
Oils



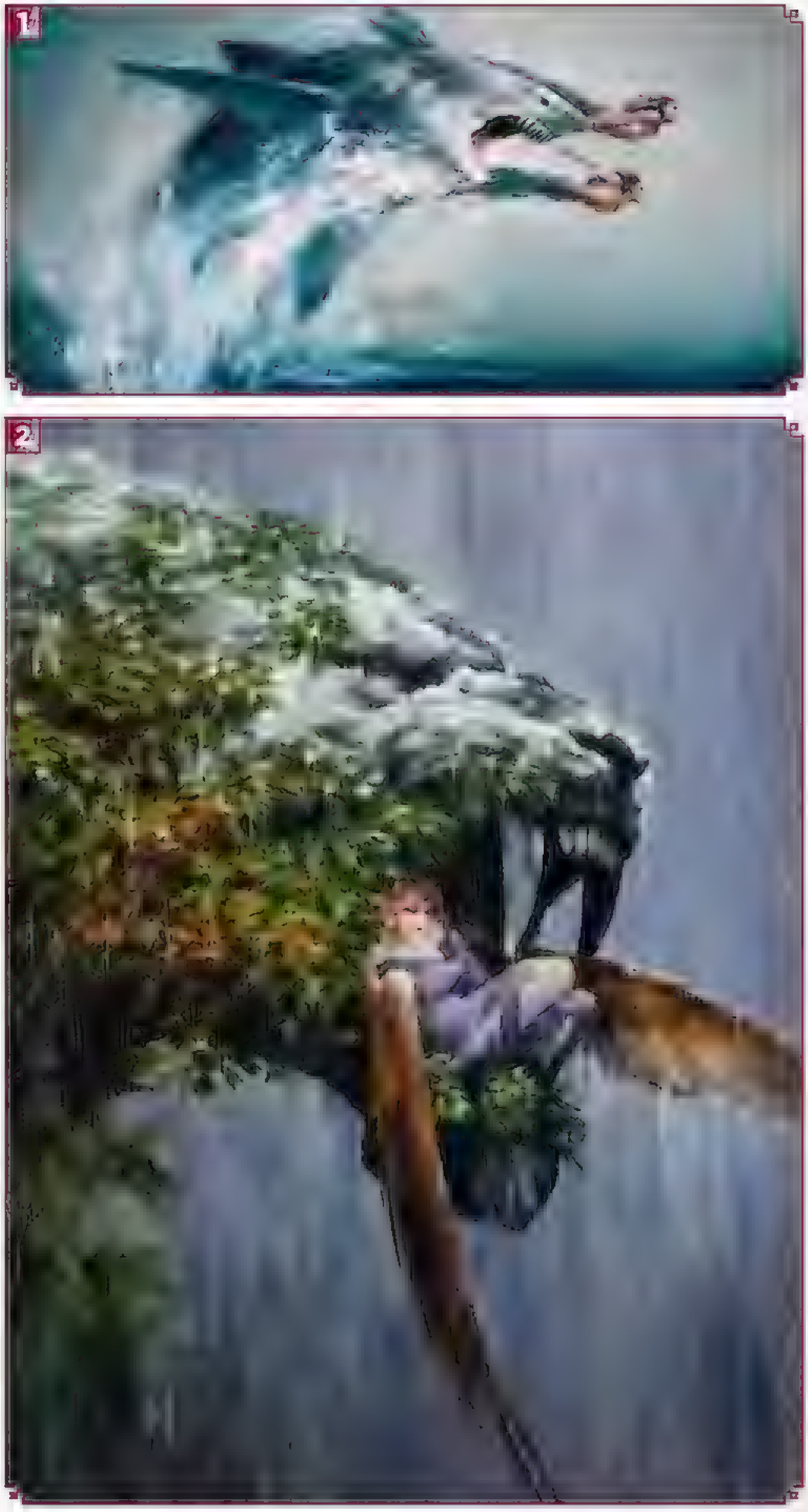
"After 20 years of working as a freelance illustrator and never getting the assignments that I truly wanted to do, I was burnt out and needed a break," says Eric. Somewhat surprisingly, he went into the construction industry for 12 years, but this gave him the chance to create his own projects at last. Now he's back where he belongs: "Within the past two to three years, I've been working as a freelance artist in the fantasy art field. Most of my commissions are from private collectors and some work from Wizards of the Coast."

Eric inevitably cites Frazetta as one of his biggest influences, but adds that his list of favourite artist has easily grown to 50 or so these days.

IMAGINEFX CRIT



"Eric's skill at implying motion in his art is evident, even in a 'quiet' scene like Shelter. And when he pulls out all the stops, as in his Roar of Bruinen, the results are breathtaking."
Cliff Hope, Operations Editor



ANTAGONISTS
30 in. oil on linen
"Who might play with a Great White and get away with it?"

SHELTER
21x25in. oil on linen
"I like to play with visual paradoxes, and a bird in a cat's mouth seemed like an interesting place to find shelter."

ROAR OF BRUINEN
42x48in. oil on linen
"An illustration from Tolkien. The part of this painting that I'm most pleased with is the figures that make up the wave. It was a lot of fun splattering the paint."

RED LION
30x38in. oil on linen
"This painting was an exploration in colour, texture (through the use of coarse linen) and paint application."





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Send up to five pieces of your work, along with their titles, an explanation of your techniques, a photo of yourself and contact details. Images should be sent as 300DPI JPEG files.

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Post: (CD or DVD):
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BA1 2BW, UK

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FANTASY Illustrator

Creative Space



PARK BLVD. STUDIOS

A new space for a long-running studio, Park Blvd. in San Diego, US is home to numerous art classes run by **Ron** and **Vanessa Lemen**

Formerly known as Studio 2nd Street, Park Blvd. Studios is an art studio run by Ron and Vanessa Lemen, two enviably talented artists who also happen to be husband and wife. Covering a roomy 4,500 square feet, the studio is divided into two main areas, part of it is dedicated to training up-and-coming fine artists, concept artists and illustrators, with the remainder set up for classes and workshops of various types.

"The studio is located in San Diego on Park Blvd. – just a few miles from Downtown and Balboa Park, the harbour, airport and train station," says Ron. "For cooling-off and stepping away from the art boards for a breather, students have a bit of space to play music, make a video, craft a sculpture or build a costume if they choose. There are also plenty of great restaurants and eating establishments just down the street."

The homey, informal feel of Park Blvd. Studios encourages students to experiment and create



The Lemens have been running an art school for the past 11 years, but the move in 2012 to this new, larger location enables them to put on bigger and better projects. Park Blvd. hosts regular open workshops that the public are welcome to attend – just bring your own drawing materials. These happen every Thursday night, and on Sundays there's also a long-pose Figure Session, both with small model fees.

Visit www.parkblvdstudios.com for more details on the classes, and for personal work see www.vanessalemenart.com and www.ronlemen.blogspot.com

Creative Space Park Blvd. Studios



Vanessa and Ron also teach a variety of online courses at The Art Department (www.theartdepartmentschool.com)





The studio offers traditional art figure-drawing classes alongside digital art lessons

STUDIO SPACE

1 & 2 Lining the edges of the room are the students' work stations.
3 Maggie Ivy and David Kegg at the gaming table.
5 Students doing their daily exercises.
6 Vanessa and Ron Lemen.

WORKS OF ART

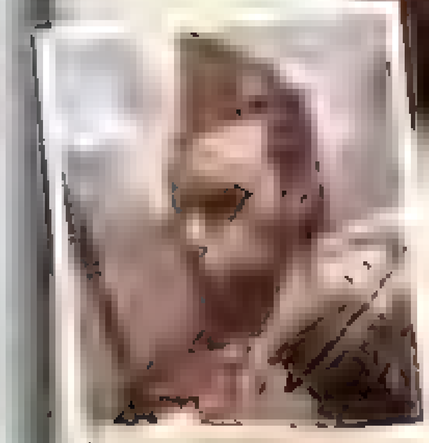
A collection of art created by the instructors and students of Park Blvd...



An ethereal oil on canvas study by instructor Vanessa Lemen

Oil plambura by Ron Lemen

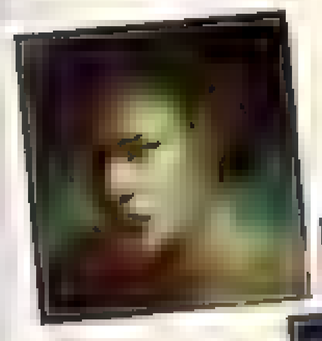




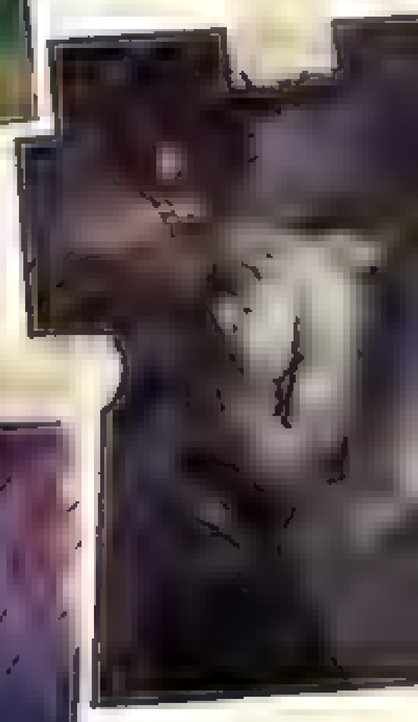
Student Steve Whitehead's mixed media Space Elf



Cory Trego-Erdner's reinterpretation of a classic Dungeons & Dragons monster



Jesse Martel's Earth Elf creation

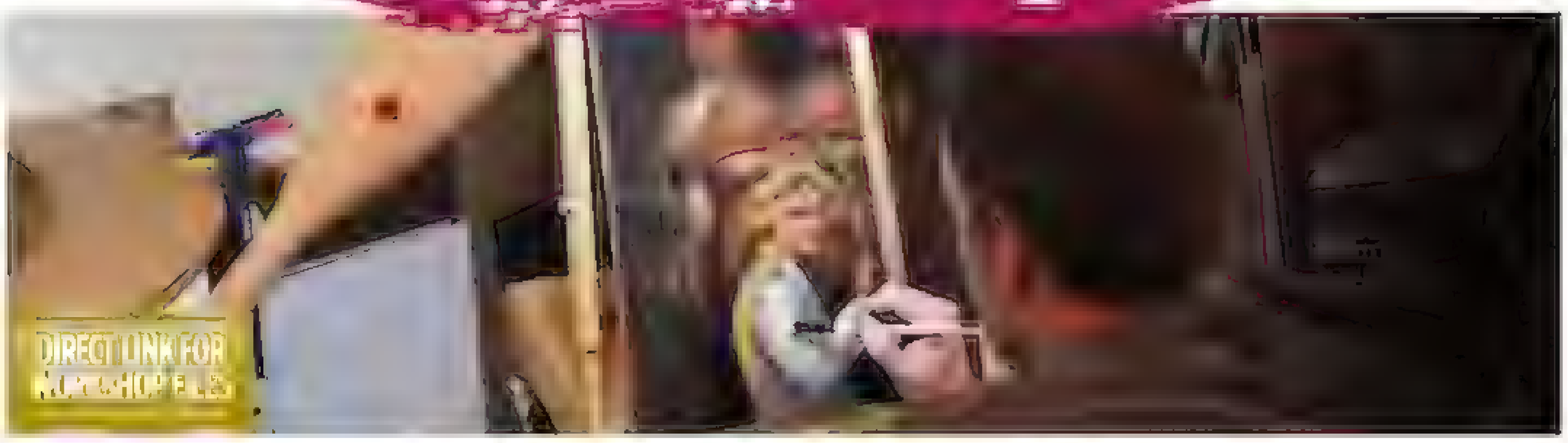


Light Demon by Alex Konstad

David Kegg's primordial goddess Tiamat

FANTASY Illustrator

Workshops



Oils

PAINTING AN EERIE COVER

Horror artist JIM PAVELEC shows you how to create a truly terrifying comic book cover in oil paint

Recently, Dark Horse Comics relaunched the classic Warren Publishing horror anthologies Creepy and Eerie. The original series, which was popular in the late 1960s and early 70s, featured cover art by some of my artistic idols such as Frank Frazetta, Sanjulián, Richard Corben and Don Maitz. It has been one of the highlights of my career to be tasked with painting the first five covers of the Eerie revival

In this workshop I'll take you through the process of pa,nting the cover for Eerie #4, from the early sketch approval process with the editor, to the execution of the final image. I started this painting at my studio, but finished it at fellow artist and Chicagoan Aaron Miller's studio. We met up there with Tom Babbey for a three-day painting session. This is a great thing to do if you can. It breaks up the monotony of being in your studio by yourself all of the time, and creates a situation where you can get immediate feedback and suggestions on your painting.

I begin almost all of my illustrations by printing out my finished drawing, and mounting it to 1/8-inch masonite, which



is a sturdy, smooth hardboard made from pressed wood fibres. This method of drawing transfer is much faster than traditional graphite transfer or projection, and when doing an i lustration in oil paint, anything you can do to save time will be worth it when the deadline sneaks up on you. Another benefit of this kind of transfer is that my orginal drawing remains intact, which enables me to have it for sale at conventions or online.

I prefer to work with oil paints because of their superior blending capability and malleability. They stay wet throughout a painting session, and so I can to go back into them with more colour, or lift paint up with a dry brush or paint thinner. I can achieve a wide variety of looks with oil paint, many of which aren't possible with other traditional media

Many people steer clear of oils, because they think it's too expensive to work with In an age of $2,000 digita, tablets, I would argue the opposite. For years I worked on an easel that I built out of scrap wood and supplies from the hardware store Furthermore, you don't need to buy every colour in existence. The o l paint aisle in the art store can look intimidating, but if you just buy some standard colours and add a few speciality colours as you progress then you can keep your budget under control

Brushes will be your biggest cost. If you want to paint fine details, you need quality brushes to do so. Aside from that, find a medium that works for you, pick up some paint thinner and paper towels and you'll be ready to dive in

MATERIALS

PAINTS
Titanium White, YelowOchre, Raw Sienna, Indian Red, Burnt Sienna, Raw Umber, Sap Green, Olive Green, Cadmium Lemon, Cadmium Yellow, Cadmium Red, Cerulean Blue, French Ultramarine Blue, Flesh Pink, Mars Black

PAINT THINNER
Liquin

BRUSHES
Various types and sizes, all other hog's ha r, synthetic sable or nylon

MEDIUMS
Acrylic matte medium
Acrylic gloss medium

TOOLS
Palette knives
Brayer

SURFACE
Masonite



As a freelance illustrator for the past 15 years, Jim has worked on a range of projects including Star Wars, World of Warcraft, Magic: The Gathering and Dungeons & Dragons, and has contributed regularly to ImagineFX.
www.jimpavelec.com





1 First contact

editor Brendan Wright
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start thumbna
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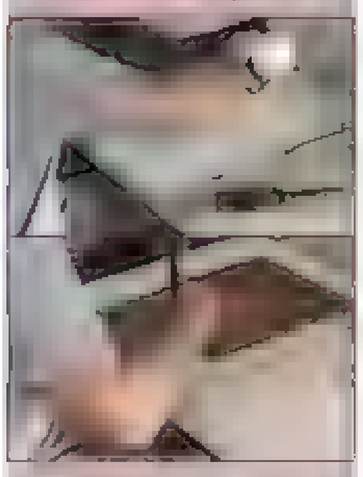
2 Drawing

thumbna and I move on to the f na
ng work w th graph te on toned paper and use white charcoa to br ng up the high ghts Th s means I solve
the tona pro
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to the narrat ve Brenc
approves the f nal draw ng

ART ST INSIGHT

MOUNTING THE DRAWING TO MASONITE

Mounting a drawing to masonite is done by coating the back of the drawing and the front of the masonite with an acrylic medium, and then pressing the two coated sides together



I use a brayer to flatten out the drawing and get rid of any air pockets between the two surfaces.

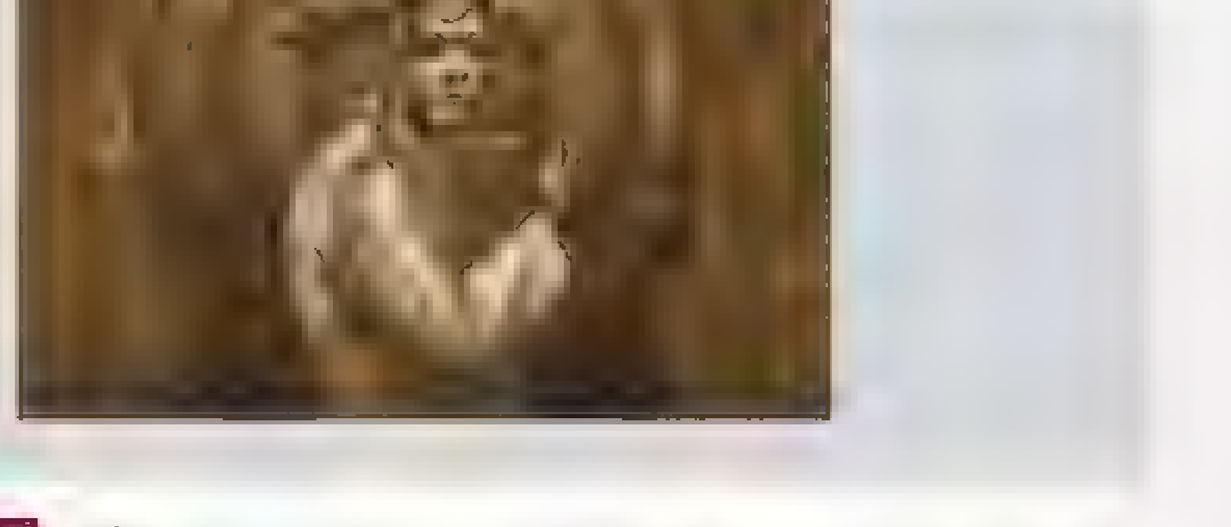


I then coat the front of the drawing with a matte acrylic medium, which will act as the ground for the oil paint.



3 Adjusting the drawing for paint

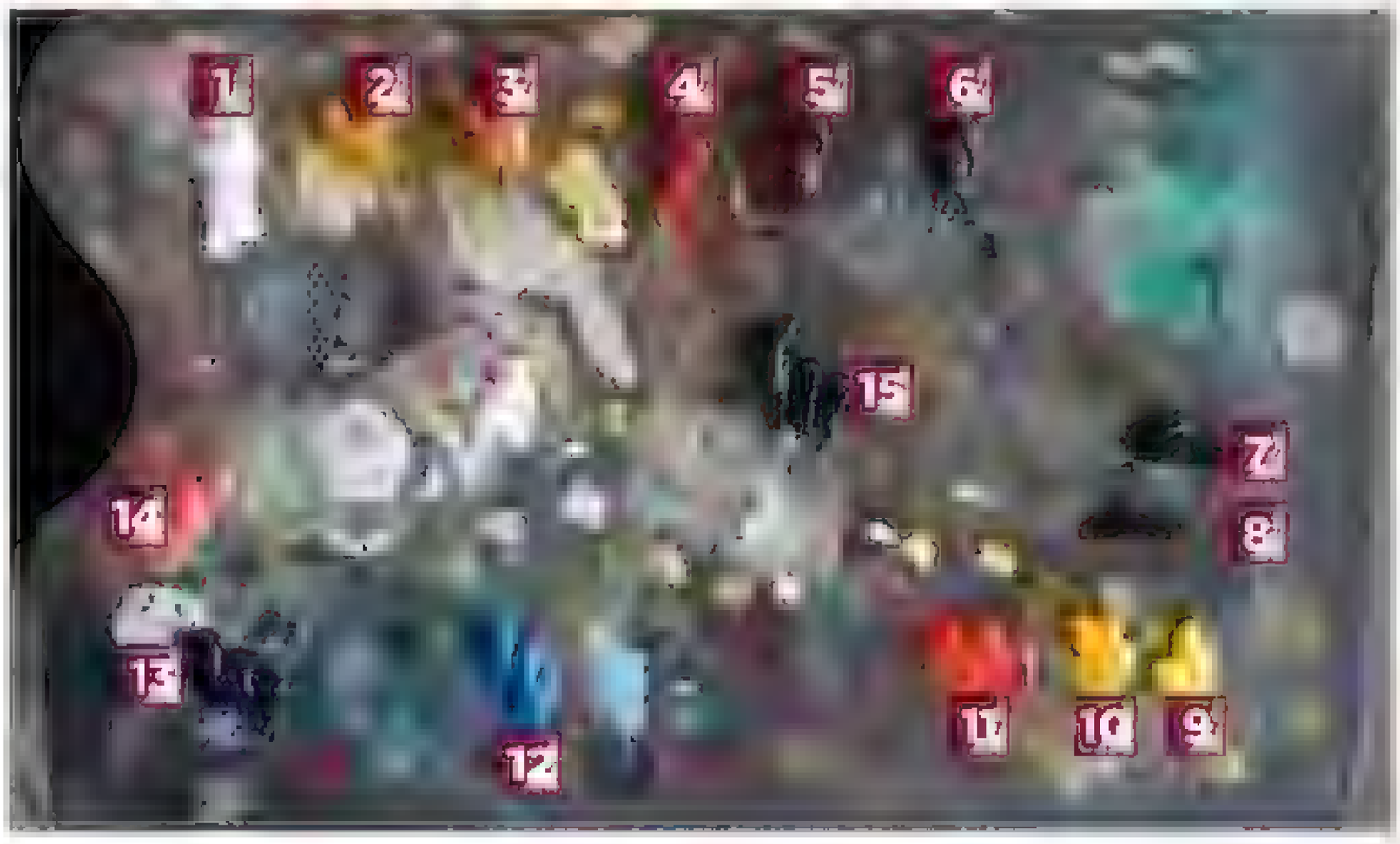
I scan n the drawing and change the greys to the browns of a trad t ona underpa nt ng in Photoshop by going into mage>Ad
Neutra s and increasing the yellow and magenta sliders pr nt the draw ng out on a heavywe ght Brist



4 Palette

se a trad t ona colour p e
much from t
pa nters from the
C

1 Titanium White 2 Yellow Ochre 3 Raw Sienna 4 Indian Red 5 Burnt Sienna 6 Raw Umber 7 Sap Green 8 Olive Green 9 Cadmium Lemon 10 Cadmium Yellow 11 Cadmium Red 12 Cerulean Blue 13 French Ultramarine Blue 14 Flesh Pink 15 Mars Black



storemags.com



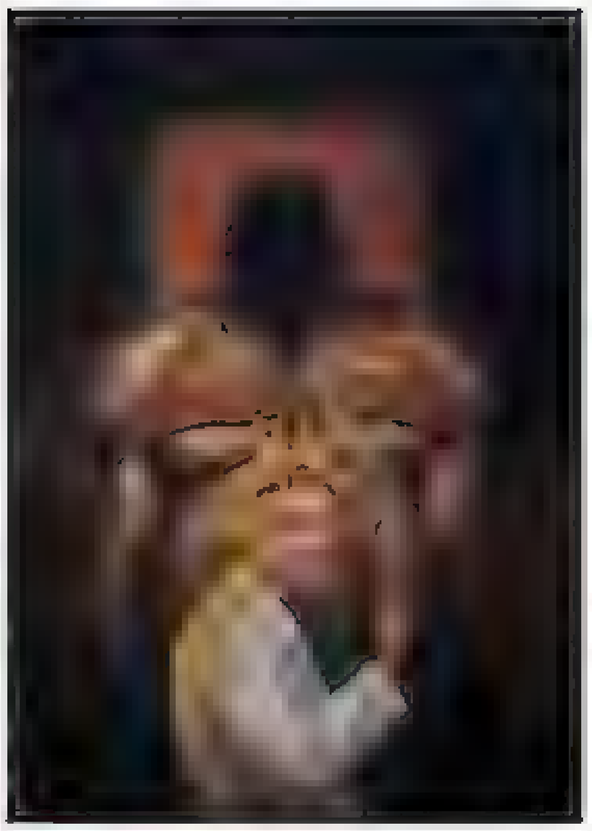
Blacks

I start the painting by laying in thin layers (glazing) of Mars Black in the background. I want to exploit the full tonal range in this painting, so the majority of the background will be absolute black. I use the same technique over the monster's head, because I want it to be in shadow. This will add a sense of mystery to the painting.

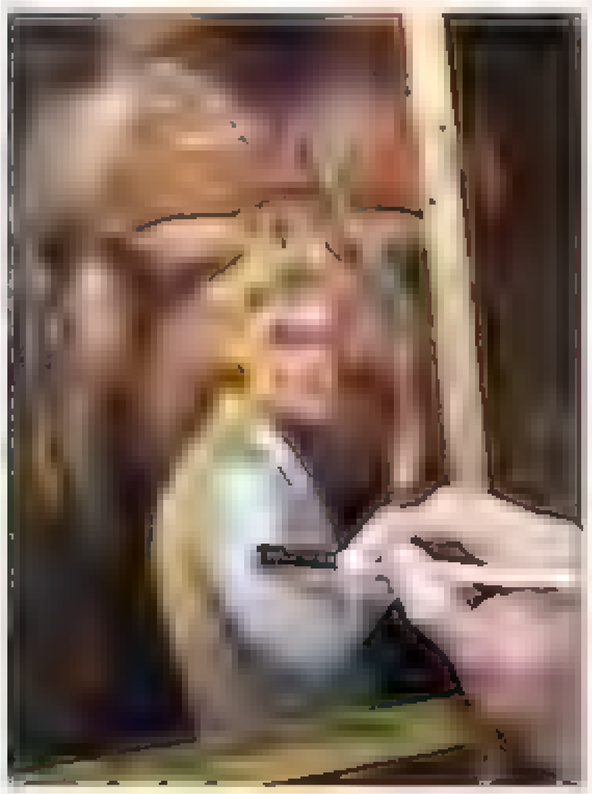
Storemags.com



ART TOOLS
VERSATILE BRAYERS
A brayer is mostly used in print making, but it just happens to be the perfect tool for mounting a drawing to board.



7 The doctor is in



8 Colours in whites



ART STRUGGLE
MANAGING THE SURFACE
Oil paints dry to different finishes. You may notice that your blacks and browns appear greyed out. To combat this you can put a layer of fast-drying varnish (I use Liquin) over the whole painting in between sessions. Doing this will give the surface an even finish, and make it easier for you to work on.

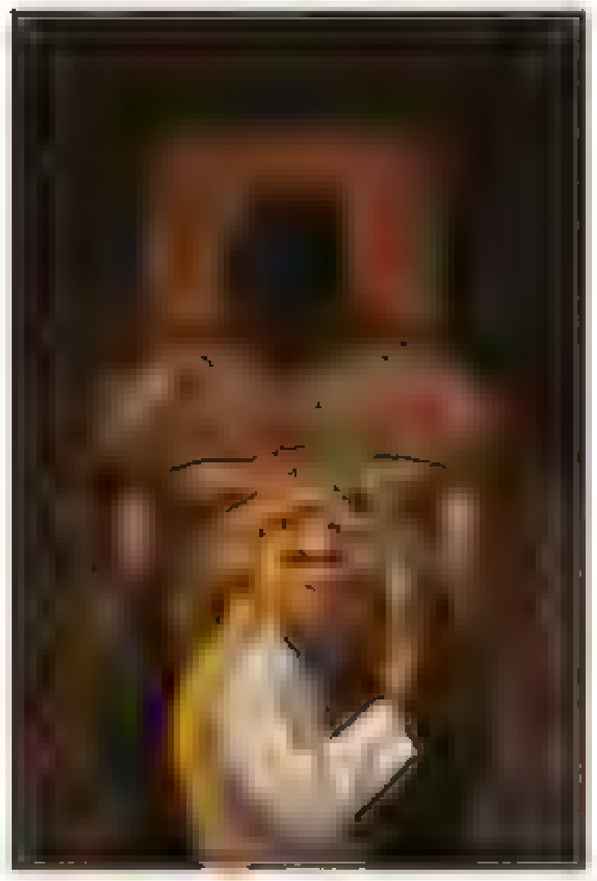
6 Behold the beast!

paint the creature's skin with a muddy combination of Raw Umber, Burnt [illegible] Flesh Pink, Titanium White and Mars Black. Variations in





Wiping out



More glazes

Final details

Pencil · Ballpoint pen

GET TO GRIPS WITH GESTURE

In the first of a new series, CHRIS LEGASPI reveals how to observe and apply gesture to your figure drawings, bringing them to life

Gesture is the first and most important skill to learn in figure drawing. Gesture is the action and movement in a pose. It's this movement that gives our figure drawings life. Gesture is also the relationship between forms. It's what connects the individual parts of the body to the whole.

When I begin to draw the figure, I first look for the dominant action or movement in the pose. I then observe the movement or relationship between the forms of the figure. For example, I look for how the head relates to the torso, or how the shoulders relate to the hips. As I develop the drawing, I continuously relate each separate form to the whole to create a cohesive figure.

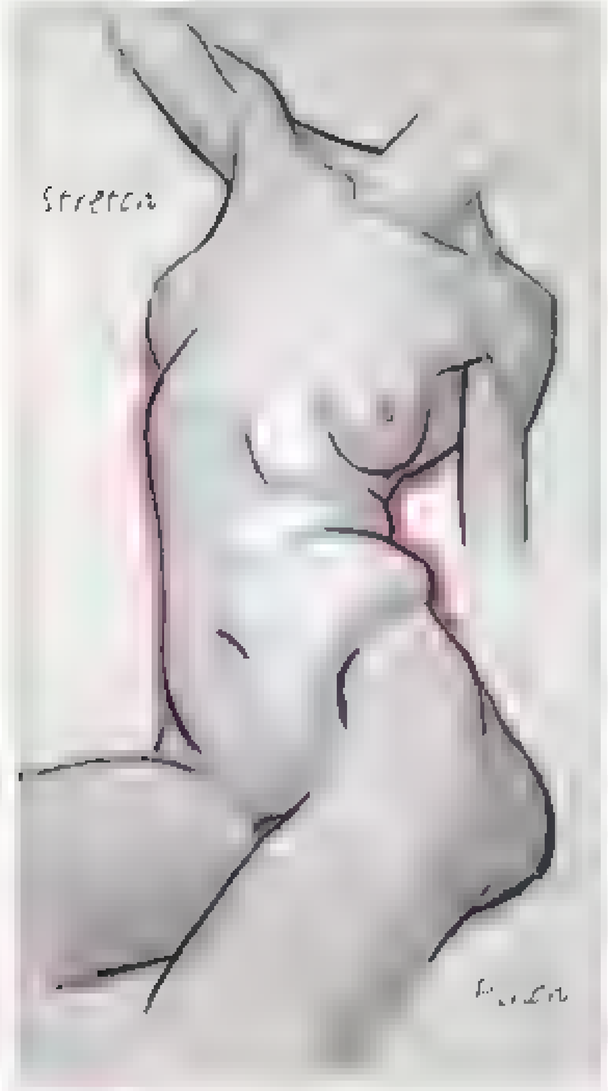
For example, I can start with the gesture of the torso. Then I relate the shoulders to the ribcage. Then I relate the ribcage to the hips. Next, I can relate the torso to the arms and legs, and then continue with the smaller forms until the figure is complete.

MATERIALS
- Smooth newsprint paper
- Carbothello pencil, black (or Conte' B)
- Kneaded eraser
- Ballpoint pen
- Sketchbook

To me, gesture is more than just 'squiggly' lines on a drawing. It's a way of thinking and observing the figure. When I work in this way, my figures become much more dynamic, believable and take on a life of their own.



Chris says he's obsessed with figure drawing and painting, and loves sharing great information on art and picture making. You can see more examples of his art, and find out what he's been up to, over at www.freshdesigner.com



DIRECTLINK FOR [illegible]

SPEED DRAWING
Draw 100–150 torso studies from life. But crucially, only spend between one and three minutes per drawing.

ARTIST INSIGHT
GET A GRIP
Hold your charcoal pencil by cupping the pencil in your fingers and palm, and rest the thumb on top. With practice, this grip will improve your dexterity and control.

1 Observing gesture on the figure

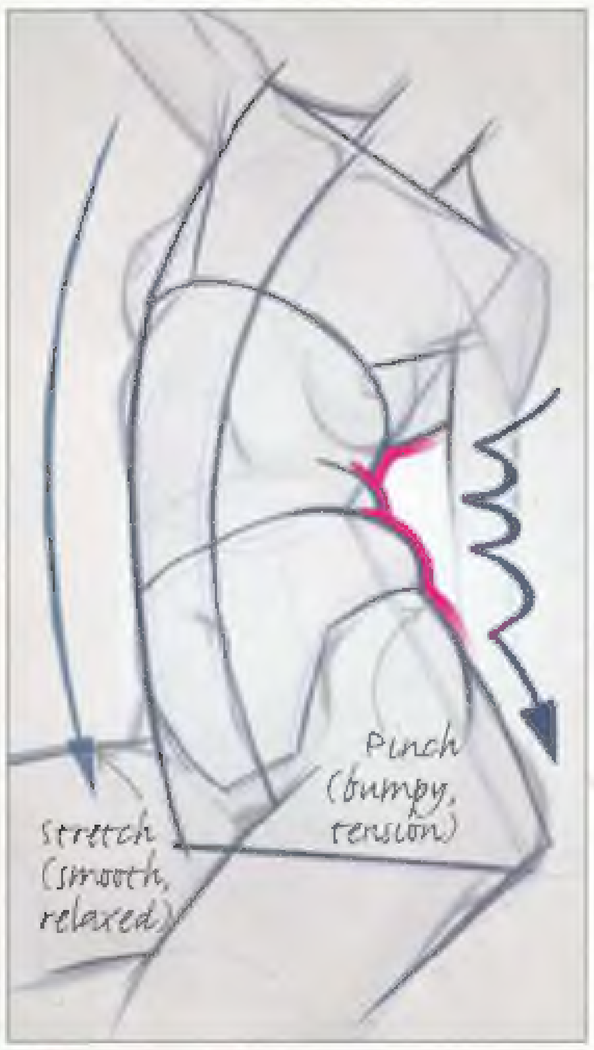
[illegible] the opposite side [illegible] contract – is known as the p nch

2 Describe the thrust and then exaggerate!

[illegible] the 'thrust' or action line. To describe the thrust I draw a curve that matches the [illegible] ke to exaggerate the [illegible] ch as poss b e [illegible] phas sing the curve

3 Describe the structure

Structure s gesture that moves [illegible] re is also the en [illegible] f a form. Corners ar [illegible] ends make our figures fee more so id To describe the structure I relate one side of the torso to the other start ng w th the shou ders and working down to the h ps.



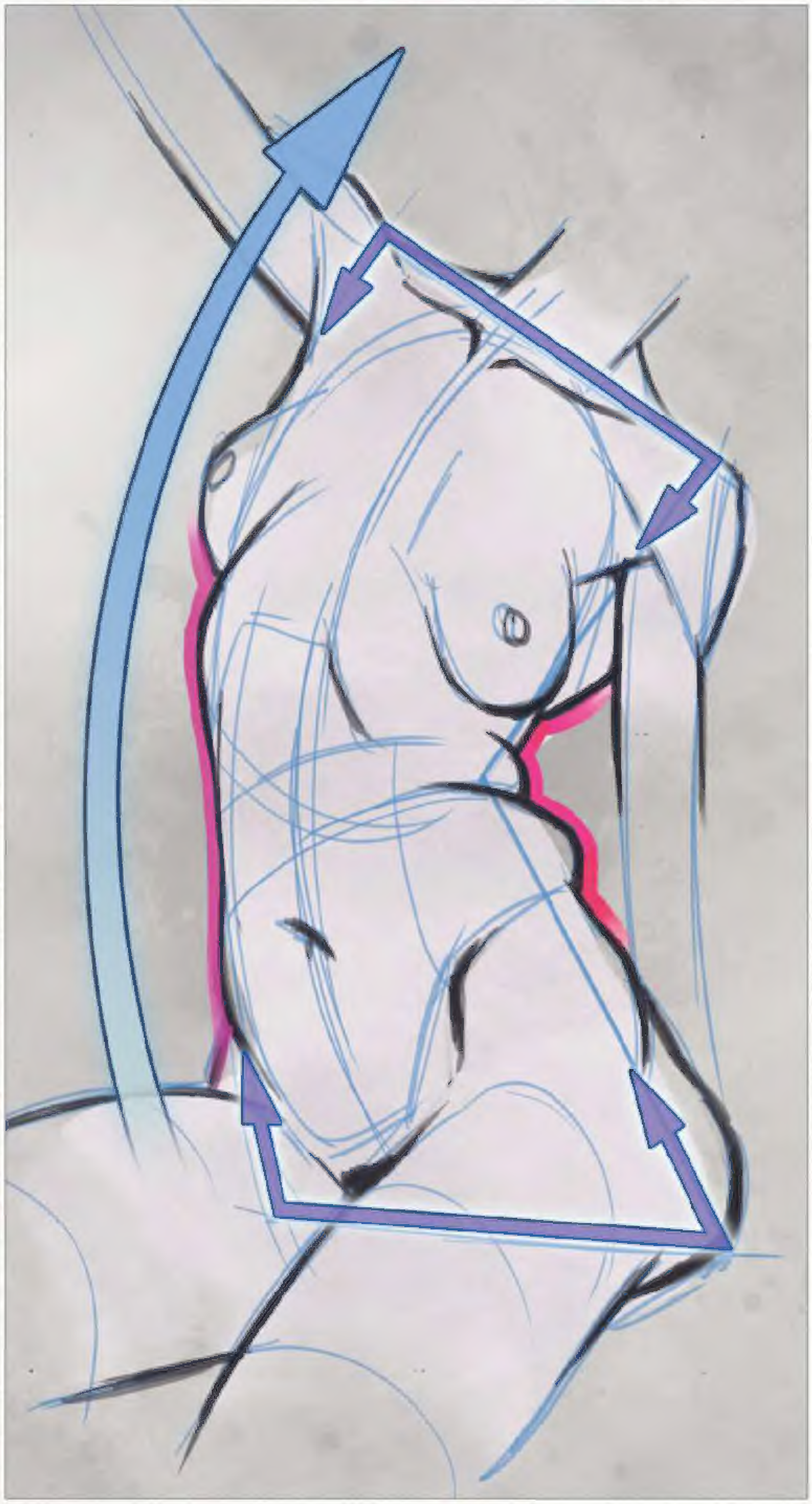
4 *Emphasise the pinch*

The opposite side of the stretch is the pinch side. The pinch is the side that's being contracted. When I draw the pinch, I like to exaggerate the bulging and contracting forms of anatomy by emphasising the overlaps and intersections of the small forms.



5 *Anatomical details*

Once I have gesture and structure established, I then describe the anatomical details. I like to follow the natural rhythms in the anatomy to design geometric shapes and patterns. It's these shapes that I use to simplify the anatomy, especially for gesture or short-pose sessions.



LOOKING FOR THIS ISSUE'S RESOURCES? SEE PAGE 6

SpicyMags.com

First Impressions

Michael Whelan

The award-winning artist reveals how he started out, and his one experience of creative block...



When did you first realise that you wanted to be an artist?
Well, to be honest I don't think that 'want' had anything to do with it. I painted and drew, and didn't question it, didn't regard it as anything special or unusual. If I read a story or saw a movie I liked, then I'd try to recreate parts of it in paint or pencil. It wasn't until my college years that I thought it was even possible that I would try to take it on as a career. The idea simply didn't enter my mind before that point.

What was your first paid commission and did you enjoy it?
The first paid assignment I had as an adult would be the medical illustration that I did for the Journal of Bone and Joint Surgery while I was at San Jose State University. Although I love studying anatomy, medical illustration isn't nearly as much fun as illustrating a fantasy or sci-fi book, so I guess I'd say my enjoyment of it was mixed.



© Fotolia

Who was your first artistic crush?



That would be the Marvel comic artist Jack Kirby, without a doubt. His sense of action and drama was a revelation to me when I discovered his work prior to my teen years.

Do you remember the first image where you thought you'd nailed it? And are you still happy with it?
The first professional illustration that gave me that feeling was my painting for the cover to the 1975 edition of The Year's Best Horror Stories, published by DAW Books. It was my second assignment for DAW. I felt I had blown it on my first assignment for the company, so I really wanted the second one to redeem me. I'm happy enough with it, though I sold it a long time ago and haven't seen it in years.



VISIONS OF CASSANDRA
This was the cover for 1975's The Year's Best Horror Stories: Series III, only the second time Michael created the cover for a book.

What was the first bit of professional praise that spurred you on?
Winning first place in the World SF Convention art show in Washington DC in 1974 was the validation I needed to submit my portfolio to publishers in New York and start my professional career. The rest is history!

> **Each time I begin a piece of work I feel like I'm reinventing the wheel**



THE WAY OF KINGS
Here's Michael's cover for Brandon Sanderson's The Way of Kings, which was published in 2010.

And the first knock-back?
Waiting to register at a sci-fi convention sometime in the mid-70s, I happened to be standing in line right behind a popular author who was proclaiming his unflattering opinions about upcoming illustrators – myself included. When he realised that I was standing right behind him, he reddened with embarrassment and started to backtrack, but I think I cured him of talking without knowing who is in listening range. By the way, we're good friends now.



What advice would you give to artists who are just starting out?
Don't waste your time imitating others' work; instead, do the work that only you can do. There's only one person who has lived your life, and that's you. Your job is to create the work that you and you alone can do.

Do you have a ritual when first starting a painting?
Each time I begin a work I feel like I'm reinventing the wheel. Every painting is a new experience, and each one has its unique way of being born. I know that sounds very unprofessional of me, but it's the simple truth.

Who's the first artist that you turn to for inspiration or to beat creative block?
I've only experienced creative block once, back in 1988. I turned to myself, going out of my studio and looking for inspiration in my reactions to what I found outside. It worked.

I think most creative blocks affect people who haven't given themselves the freedom to get out of their studios, or out of their mind set.

And finally, how do you know when an image is finished?
Generally, I work on something until I feel it matches my mental view of how it should look. Norman Rockwell was quoted as saying that it took two people to get a painting done: one to do the painting and a spouse with a shotgun, to tell him that if he spent another minute on it he would get shot!

To see more of Michael's work, visit www.michaelwhelan.com.

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